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FRANCE BEFORE THE REVOLUTION

OR

PRIESTS, INFIDELS, AND HUGUENOTS

IN THE REIGN OF LOUIS XV.

BY L. F. BUNGENER,

AUTHOR OF "THE HISTORY OF THE COUNCIL OF TRENT," ETC.

AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION

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ADVERTISEMENT.

This interesting Work originally appeared in France, under the title of "Three Sermons under Louis XV." Two translations are already before the public, under different titles, viz.—"The Court and the Desert," 3 vols. post 8vo. £1, 11s. 6d.; "The Priest and the Huguenot; or, Persecution in the Age of Louis XV.," 2 vols. 12mo. 12s.: IN THE SUCCESS OF THE PRESENT TRANSLATION THE AUTHOR HAS AN EQUAL INTEREST WITH THE PUBLISHERS.

FRANCE BEFORE THE REVOLUTION.

CHAPTER I.

It was a day in July 1760, about the end of the month—evening was drawing on—when a priest might have been seen walking quickly towards one of the doors of the cathedral at Meaux. He wore a travelling dress—broad-brimmed hat, bands, dark cloak, gaiters, and dusty shoes. His figure was tall and erect, his eye bright and intelligent, although set beneath rather a low forehead; in a word, his whole appearance was rather unpolished than dignified. It would have been impossible to say whether at the moment he was under the influence of emotion or simply hurried. A few steps from the door, however, a feeling of emotion became more apparent on his features. He involuntarily slackened his pace. His eyes were turned steadfastly towards the interior of the church, and seemed as though they sought some object there. As he was about to cross the threshold—"Charity, your reverence!" said one of the numerous beggars sitting or kneeling, according to custom, on either side of the porch. And as the priest seemed neither to see nor hear him—"Charity!" repeated he. The tone of his voice, notwithstanding a very marked southern accent, was abrupt and

proud. He seemed rather to command than to entreat. It was like a deep feeling of indignation that only sought an opportunity of bursting forth. A whisper ran from one to the other amongst the rest of the beggars.

"That man is mad," said one woman. "Is that the way to speak?"

"And to a priest!" said another.

"And his first day, besides!" muttered a blind man.

The priest, turning round, heard these last words, and cast a look upon the beggar, which was at first careless, but afterwards more attentive.

"It is your first day, from what I hear. You do not know how to beg yet."

"I know that I am starving, and"—

"You are starving?"

"Yes."

"It is false!"

"I"—

"I tell you it is false!"

The forward beggar cast down his eyes.

"You are not starving," repeated the priest slowly, "and you are not what you"—

The beggar started, and the priest, seeing his look of alarm, interrupted himself.

"Wait for me here," said he; "I wish to speak to you." He then entered the church.

He had scarcely advanced a few steps when he again stopped, as if not knowing to what side he ought to turn. The church was dark and deserted, for, as we have already said, evening was drawing on. No sound was to be heard but the murmur of the prayers of a few women, kneeling here and there, in the chapels and beside the pillars. Seeing no one who appeared able to direct him in his search, he went

straight on, knelt for an instant on the lowest step of the high altar, crossing himself as he did so; then, turning to the left, he began to read, as he still walked on, the inscriptions with which the walls and the pavement were covered. The darkness increased, and at each monument he was obliged to stoop a little lower. His impatience seemed to augment at each step. He seemed almost angry with the dead, known or unknown, who came thus inopportunely and placed themselves between him and the object of his search. At last he stopped suddenly. Behind the high altar, against the wall, on a marble tablet, where an episcopal mitre stood out in relief above some well-designed books, he had perceived these words:—

"Hic quiescit, resurrectionem expectans,
Jacobus Benignus BOSSUET,
Episcopus Meldensis,
Serenissimi Delphini Præceptor,
Universitatis Parisiensis
Privilegiorum apostolicorum Conservator,
Collegii Regii Navarræ Superior.
Obiit anno Domini m.dcc.iv.
Annos natus lxxvi.
Requiescat in pace."*

The priest did not go further than the second line. What mattered to him these titles, these dates? He only sought a name, and that name he had found—his eyes were fixed upon it. It seemed as though he saw through the marble the well-known features of him whose remains the tablet pointed out. "Yes," murmured he, "*Hic quiescit!* He is here!—*Quiescit:* I like the word—*he rests!* He has all

* "Here lies, awaiting the resurrection, James Benigne Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux, Preceptor to His Serene Highness the Dauphin, Guardian of the apostolical privileges of the University of Paris, Superior of the Royal College of Navarre. Deceased in the year of our Lord 1704, aged 76. May he rest in peace!"

eternity to rest, as he used to say to his friends, like Arnauld and Nicole, when they advised him to take a little rest in this world. *Quiescit!*—after sixty years of labour, that word is sufficient eulogy in itself. O God! if it be one day written on my tomb, will it be a word of eulogy also? Will men say?—but let men say what they will. What avails what I say, as I read these lines, to him who lies there? but Thou, O my God! what wilt Thou say? Wilt Thou deem that I have fulfilled my work? *Quiescit*—he is here."

He stretched out his hand towards the marble. He seemed to expect it to soften beneath his touch. "Does he see me?" resumed he. "Am I allowed to think that my labours, that —but no; begone—begone such thoughts! Whilst I am here, almost on my knees, upon his tomb, pride follows me into the very presence of that glory before which I seem to be humbling myself—even upon these ashes which teach me at the very same moment its nothingness! I asked if he sees me—if he hears me! Such are we: it is not enough to be seen and heard by the living, we want to be seen and heard by the dead also. Poor human heart! poor human heart! After having preached so much to others, this, then, is the point at which I am still myself. Who will preach, then, to me? Alas! he also, whilst he imagined he sought the glory of God only, how often did he not seek his own!"

He paused, and, after a long silence:—"Alarming thought!" he pursued, "to think that one may have seemed to labour forty, fifty, sixty years for the glory of God, and the salvation of our fellow-creatures, whilst, out of the total amount, in God's sight not one, one single one, of these years has been devoted to Him, fully and sincerely! To think that one might die at one's post, and yet be cast out at the Last Day as an unprofitable servant! What is *his* state now? has God already settled with him this terrible account? *He*

rests, men have written there. What do they know about it?"

Then, carried back to the first thoughts awakened by his proximity to the mortal remains of Bossuet—"He who so well said: 'Come and see the little that is left to us of so much greatness and glory,' has been himself, for nearly sixty years, beyond that gate of which he described the terrors! It is he who is now 'that something which has no longer a name in any language!' Oh! my God, however eloquent may have been the voices that spoke of eternity while on earth, how much more eloquent are they when hushed in silence! What pulpit is there like the tomb! What orator like death! And he is there himself—there, beneath my feet! If I were to raise this slab, I should see him!"

"You would not see him!" said a voice. It was not that of the beggar; but the accent was so exactly the same, that the priest, somewhat startled, mistook it for the moment. "Is it you?" said he, turning quickly round. But almost as quickly—"I beg your pardon," resumed he; "I thought"—

The person who had broken in upon him was likewise in travelling costume: broad-brimmed hat, black cloak, gaiters, and dusty shoes. His sun-burnt countenance bespoke the rustic; but his bearing was easy and even noble. Although he did not appear more than forty, his hair was almost white. "It is I who should beg your pardon," said he, "I have disturbed your meditations."

"I was speaking almost aloud, I believe," said the priest; "you heard me?"

"Some words—the last. I understood that you thought you stood on the tomb of the former Bishop of Meaux, and"—

"Am I not there? and this epitaph?"

"It only remained twenty years upon the grave of Bossuet.

The Cardinal de Bissy had the front of the high altar repaired in 1724. The monuments were removed and put here. The body of Bossuet then remained"—

"Where? you know the spot?"

"There—before the first step"—

"There, say you? on the very spot where I knelt just now!"

He hurried thither. Nothing, in fact, indicated a tomb. Slabs of green and white marble covered the whole space comprised between the altar and the railing of the choir.

"So it is in life," said the stranger. "We pass by the truth without seeing it, and we pay our homage to that which has but its semblance."

"Yes," added the priest: "and what is still worse, the semblance has often charms over which the truth itself does not easily triumph. See, sir—I am almost sorry you have undeceived me. All that Bossuet had to say to me, he has said yonder—where he is not. It is in vain that he has been. To my imagination and my heart, he will still be yonder—and he went to cast a last look on the epitaph. The stranger followed him.

"After all," said the latter, "if the shade of Bossuet is anywhere in this church, it is neither there nor here. You know that our shades, according to the poets, delight in the spots where in our lifetime we were best pleased to be. If Bossuet were to appear to us, it is yonder, I think, that we should see him;" and he pointed to the pulpit, which was seen in the distance through the pillars of the nave.

The priest shook his head.

"Do you think so?" said he. "I think, on the contrary, that he would not be at all pleased to be there unless God gave him power to drive out the preachers of the day, or to inspire them with a very different kind of eloquence."

"That is precisely," resumed the stranger, "what I thought

just now, as I passed before that pulpit. I know little of the preachers of the day; but it appears that Bossuet has sons whom he would scarcely acknowledge—affectation, empty sound, many words and few ideas, abundance of philosophy, and hardly any Christianity."

"*Hardly any?* say rather, *none.*"

"With all my heart; but I did not venture"—

"Why?"

"Your habit"—

"My habit is a livery which ought not to prevent my blaming those who degrade it."

"This frankness does you honour; and you must have many opportunities of practising it. Yes, as you say, the traditions of the gospel are more and more unknown to your preachers. You have but one, it is said, who has escaped this universal decline, and who can be cited as a really Christian orator. I have heard him once, and"—

"It is—?"

Had the church been less dark than it was, he to whom this question was addressed might have seen the eyes of the priest shining with unusual brightness. His cheeks coloured slightly. His hand trembled a little.

"It is—?" repeated he.

"Father—stay—Father Bridaine."

"Ah! Father Bridaine. Yes; I think I have heard him."

"And what did you think of him?"

"I like your idea, however," said the priest, half absent, and as if wishing to change the subject. "Yes—the shade of Bossuet in that pulpit. I think, indeed, that if I were to remain here an hour or two, alone, in the evening, as at present—amongst these tombs—lost in this solemn twilight—imagination—the darkness"—

"Well?"

"Do not smile. I think I should see him at last. I should see him advancing slowly. He would glide along those pillars—no noise; on the contrary, he would seem to bring silence with him, as night brings it to us at this moment. Behind him, before him, the darkness would thicken —still I should see him. I should see nothing but him at last. When he had reached the foot of the pulpit, he would ascend —ascend. Good God!"

"What?"

"See—there!"

The priest stood amazed and motionless, his arm stretched out in the direction of the pulpit. Darkness had completely closed in upon the church. The last glimmerings of twilight scarcely made their way through the painted windows. A lamp burned before the altar, and its rays, which till then had been unperceived, were gradually filling the space which daylight had deserted. By this uncertain light, a human form was seen to mount the pulpit stairs. It was, as far as could be seen, that of a tall man. His hair was white, and when the light of the lamp was thrown upon his face, the face appeared white likewise. Had the priest really imagined that he beheld him whom his imagination had just invoked?—we cannot tell. Perhaps at the first moment he would have been rather at a loss to define what he felt. At the stifled exclamation which had escaped him, the figure, one foot already on the first step, had appeared to listen. Then they heard his steps and the rustling of a gown. In fact, when it had reached the pulpit, there was not a doubt left, that if it was an apparition, it was an apparition in flesh and blood.

The singularity of the adventure still remained. What was this priest's business there (for the figure had bands on) at that hour, and in the dark?

He sat down, drew out his handkerchief, coughed, but in doing so, endeavoured to make the least possible noise. He was evidently under the influence of that vague agitation which lays hold of the mind amongst the tombs, and makes us speak in a whisper even if we have to do with a deaf person. A similar effect had been produced upon our two travellers, and this was doubtless the reason that the mysterious priest had not heard them speak. At last, he rose—

"Eh!" said both his invisible hearers at once—"a sermon, it seems."

The orator crossed himself. Then a second time, a third time, and each time he modified his attitude.

"What is he doing?" said the priest.

"Don't you understand?"

"No. Ah! yes; I have it. I—I fear I do understand."

"Alas! Sir, this is one of the very preachers you were speaking of. He is come here to study his part."

The crossing went on. "Miserable Court ape!" muttered the priest. "Will he have soon done? Why does he not rather choose a Marchioness's boudoir? He would at least find a glass there to see himself in."

The silent orator was at length satisfied with himself. The last time he had crossed himself it was with irreproachable elegance. He then did it again, saying, "*In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.*" His voice was that of a man of thirty or thirty-five, agreeable but affected; art had destroyed nature, and the orator was evidently one of those who think that it cannot be destroyed too effectually. Then came his text:—"*Nihil aliud inter vos scire volui, nisi Christum, et Christum crucifixum.*" The translation followed, according to custom:—"For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." *

* 1 Cor. ii. 2.

These words were repeated in the same tone in which he would have recited a madrigal of Chaulieu, of Bernis, or de la Fare, or—but it would be endless to name all the versifiers of the day who were called poets, and on whose verses it was evident that our orator had fed more than on the prose of St. Paul. The priest and his companion began however better to distinguish his countenance. Whether it was that their eyes were becoming more accustomed to the partial light, or that their imagination being calmer permitted them to see better, there was now nothing left of the phantom about him. To the cadaverous pallor had succeeded a very florid complexion. The hair was still white, but with powder. The dark cloak was changed into an elegant cassock, which showed to advantage his well-proportioned figure. There was not a doubt then left, that he was one of those "fat fellows, with ten thousand crowns a year," as La Bruyère calls them, in describing the Court abbés.

"Sire," said he.

A new discovery. It was a sermon to be preached before the king.

"Sire," repeated he, and after having enunciated the word in various keys, he appeared at last to have found the one that suited him. It was a happy enough mixture of grace and power, of confidence and humility.

"Sire," he continued; "it was thus that a great apostle expressed himself—one who had been chosen by Providence to disseminate the instructions and the virtues of the Christian legislator."

"There it is," muttered the priest—"*Great apostle—Providence—Christian legislator.*"

"What would you have?" said the other. "The Encyclopædia has shown the way. Religion, to be tolerated, must turn philosopher. Instead of God, *Providence*—it is more

vague; every one takes it as he likes. Instead of Jesus Christ, *the Christian legislator*—not to alarm those who make Him a Teacher like any other. *Apostle*, *great apostle*—but how could he say simply Peter or John, Paul or James—and before the Court too!"

"And to think," said the priest, "that it is nearly the same thing all over France!" The stranger smiled.

"All over France? I know of a corner where I promise you that it is not, and that it never will be, the same."

"And that corner is —?"

"The—Desert."

"You say the"—

But the orator had continued, and the priest, without waiting for a clearer answer, began to listen again. After a picture of the labours and sufferings of the apostle well enough drawn—"What was the secret of his strength?" he had said; "whence did he draw so much courage and perseverance?" But instead of answering with the apostle himself, "By faith," which, in 1760, would have savoured much too strongly of bigotry—"In his devotedness to his Master," the orator had replied; and upon this followed a long tirade on devotedness in general, on the strength that it gives, and the courage it inspires. This part, however, was clever, and did not want for animation; it would have figured perfectly well in a serious and Christian discourse, but as an accessory. Unfortunately, that which should have been only accessory appeared the most important; the orator was evidently determined not to go further. Was the learned abbé at least going to confine himself to that which is most pure, according to the merely human standard to which he had reduced St. Paul's devotedness? It seemed at one moment that he was at last going to enter upon the religious view of the question.

"And who is the Master," he had said, "to whom the

apostle is proud to have given himself wholly? 'I am bound to know nothing,' writes he, 'but Christ'—what Christ? —Christ glorified, doubtless—Christ seated for ever at the right hand of God his Father. No! Christ in His abasement—Christ in His humility—Christ condemned—Christ crucified!"

"Good! abbé, very good!" But he had only risen to fall the more completely.

It was not easy in France to preach with impunity before the king, and where a Bossuet, a Bourdaloue, a Massillon, had so often and so sadly failed, it was not a Court abbé who could refrain, in 1760, from burning a little incense on the altar of the same idol. Thus, the abasement of Christ was introduced only to bring about a compliment to the king. Was not one necessary, according to custom, at the end of the exordium?

"Certainly," he had therefore added, "this is a species of devotedness which your Majesty has never inspired to any one. Under whatever aspect your servants contemplate you, they see in you only greatness and glory. Greatness of birth, greatness in your undertakings, greatness in your virtues, greatness in everything that proceeds from you! Ah! how easy is devotedness to such a master! How little merit there is in serving you! But devotedness to misfortune, devotedness despite of humiliation and outrage, this it is that is difficult and truly beautiful; this is what we are going to admire; this is what we shall ask of God through the intercession of Mary."

"*Mary*, indeed! *Mary*," muttered the priest again. "Formerly we said *the Virgin—the holy Virgin*; but now—bah! people would laugh. *Mary*—that is a better style. What do you say?"

"I have nothing to say on the question. *Mary* or *the*

Virgin, it little matters; as for me, I should say neither the one nor the other."

"You would say, then?"—

He made no answer, and began to listen again. The priest began to think the tone of his companion rather strange. He had already asked himself once or twice whom he had to do with. Was he a stranger in the place, as his travelling costume would seem to indicate? But the details he had given him as to Bossuet's burial-place seemed rather to bespeak a citizen of Meaux. Was he one of the infidels of the day? He appeared, indeed, very little devout as regarded the Virgin, but then he had spoken of Christianity and of Christ precisely as the priest wished that all preachers should speak. And that mysterious name, which his interlocutor had not caught, but which did not resemble that of any province? The stranger, on his part, began to perceive the perplexity into which he had thrown his companion. "Suppose we go away?" said he. "The exordium is finished; the sermon will perhaps be very long. You see, besides, that it is always the same thing. Now he has taken up his *devotedness* in detail—devotedness of the ancients, devotedness of the moderns, devotedness amongst savages—all is there, save Christian devotedness."

"Let us go, then; I am quite willing," said the priest. "I have heard only too much."

"But let us take care that he neither sees nor hears us; let us go down the lower aisle—this way—in the shade. What now!—he has stopped; has he heard us?"

"He has stopped short, I think."

"Yes, indeed—see, he is seeking his sentence; he is at a loss for a word—impossible—he must have it by all means."

"He deserves that the same thing should happen to him before the king."

"See what it is to learn by rote—mechanically: lose a word, and all is lost."

"One would think you were of the profession," said the priest.

"I?—see, he is coming down from the pulpit. Where is he going?"

"Under the lamp—he is turning the leaves of his manuscript—he has found the word—he is going up again; let us pass while his back is turned."

They reached the end of the nave, but thence there was no means of exit; the three doors were shut.

"We might have thought so," said the priest; "he has taken measures not to be disturbed. I remember, now, having seen from a distance a beadle turning out the women. What shall we do?"

"Let us wait; he must open the door himself, or some one must open it for him."

"He is getting animated—let us go nearer; the end will probably be curious."

The end, however, was still far off. He was citing Orestes and Pylades. At last came the application. After having listened for some minutes—"Impious!" exclaimed the priest. But the orator, more and more excited, did not hear him.

"I would fain," he had said—"I would fain conclude by some example which should bring vividly before your eyes all that I have just pointed out to you. I would fain choose this example in the palace of royalty, and, if it were possible, here—but what? have I not already said, Sire, when I commenced this discourse, that here devotedness has no merit, so easy, so delightful is it? Were I to name all those whose hearts are wholly yours, I should name all those who are listening to me, all your subjects, your whole Court. Nevertheless, in the midst of this tide of affection which flows towards you from all sides, may I not be permitted to mention

a devotedness which, if not more entire, is at least more special, more constant, and dearer to your heart? If devotedness to misfortune in the case of a prince surrounded by glory and happy in the happiness he confers, is a thing necessarily unknown, still royalty has its cares, its fatigues, its trials. Happy then, happy the hand to whom it is given to smooth them! Happy the long friendship"—

It was at this point that the priest had exclaimed—"Impious!"

There could, indeed, be no mistake: it was to the *friendship* of Madame de Pompadour that the orator dared to allude. So long as this connexion had been manifestly impure, the pulpit at Versailles had been satisfied to remain silent and unmoved, as under Louis XIV.; but since the king's mistress, on reaching her fortieth year, had chosen to style herself his *friend*, the most scrupulous had eagerly adopted this view of the case. It was well known that the Marchioness, in order to prolong that degrading influence which she no longer hoped for from her own charms, had ended by becoming the purveyor of the ignoble pleasures of the *Parc-aux-cerfs*. Appearances were saved. What more was wanted? What need to inquire into that which passed under the chaste mantle of friendship? It was thus that our preacher at Meaux had done, like many others; and, as is often the case, he had gone much further than his predecessors.

It was doubtful, however, whether a reputation thus restored would be to the taste of the favourite herself. The expression, *long friendship*, above all, might chance to be unwelcome. Was it not forcing on people's recollection that the intimacy had lasted fifteen years—the friendship two or three? Was it not, besides, bestowing publicly upon her that certificate of mature years so unwillingly accepted by women in general? But our abbé, in his zeal, did not look so closely

into the question. Who has sense enough never to be the bear of the fable? He had concluded—a triumphal tirade closed the sermon.

"I am quite overpowered by it," said the priest. "No; this abominable sermon shall not be preached!"

"How?"

"It shall not, I repeat; I would rather go—yes—I would rather go to the king himself."

"But what now? he is beginning again."

He did indeed begin again, but rapidly and without gesture, as one who is repeating over for the last time a lesson of which he wishes to be quite sure.

"This time," said the priest, "it is really too much."

"We must have done with it. Let us show ourselves."

"Come—but no; go—go alone. I could not restrain myself."

"If I restrain myself, believe me, it is not without difficulty."

He went forward, and, as the preacher stopped in astonishment—"Sir," said he, "there are persons here who have just heard you"—

"Heard me?"

"And who wish to go out. Not but that they have been charmed"—

The preacher bowed. "Sir, you overpower me; might I ask what happy chance"—

"I really think," said the priest, in a whisper, "that he imagines we are delighted. Let him believe it—I shall meet him again."

"We were at the lower end of the church—the doors are shut"—

"I desired it. Forgive me this hour of imprisonment and —of ennui."

This last word sought a compliment. He paused, as if expecting one; but his two hearers were not men to push the joke further.

"You wish to go out?" resumed he, evidently less polite. "Knock at that little door behind you—a beadle is waiting outside to open to me."

They went out. The beadle closed the door after them and went away.

CHAPTER II.

Amidst these incidents, the priest had forgotten the man in the porch. A few steps from the church, however, the thought recurred to him; and though it appeared little probable that the beggar would still be waiting for him—

"Excuse me," said he to his companion; "I have business this way. Thank you, sir, for your company."

"Farewell; I shall remember this evening, and the tomb of Bossuet."

"And I shall not forget him who showed it to me. Shall we never meet again?"

"I am going to Paris."

"And I also. Where shall you lodge?"

"At—no—let us leave it to God to bring us together if it is His will."

"So be it—I accept the rendezvous; it will perhaps be more certain than those that we arrange for ourselves. One word more: are you of Meaux?"

"No."

"Of Paris?"

"No."

"Of what province, then?"

The stranger appeared to hesitate. "Of none," said he.

"You are not a Frenchman?"

"I am—and I am not"—

"In God's name, whence are you?"

"From the—*Desert.*"

The priest understood at last. He let go the stranger's hand precipitately; then, seeming to repent that he had done so, he took it again, and pressed it, but without adding a word.

Seated at the same spot, the beggar was waiting for him. "At last!" said he, rising. "Your devotions have been very long." And, with the same manner as when he had asked for alms, he advanced towards the priest, when, on a sudden, the latter saw him turn pale, stagger, and at last fall down on his knees, his arms stretched out in the direction of the street.

"Judas!" said a voice from behind; and the priest, turning round, saw a man disappear in the darkness, whom he recognised as the companion from whom he had just parted. But the beggar, rising from his knees, had rushed towards the church. His hands convulsively clasped together over his head, he clung to the pillars of the porch, and sobbed fearfully. He seemed as though he would have willingly sunk into the wall, to escape from some terrible vision. The priest drew near to him. "What is the matter? What has happened? He is gone"—

"I will not see him—I will not"—

"He is gone, I tell you!"

"He is gone?" said the man, turning round distrustfully; and when he had made sure of it—"You knew me, then," resumed he, "when you told me to wait for you? *He* had seen me?—*he* had told you who I was?"

"*He*—*he*—who?"

"*He*—Rabaut."

"It was Rabaut—Rabaut from the Cevennes?"

"Yes; Rabaut from the Desert—the minister Rabaut. Did you not know him?"

"I had just left him, but I did not know his name. How he happened to be behind me at that moment, I cannot tell."

On parting from the priest, Rabaut—for it was he—was surprised to see him turning towards a door which he knew to be shut. A man on whose head a price is fixed has a right to be distrustful. He had followed him.

"You did not know him, then?" cried the beggar; "and I have named him!—to a priest! My God! my God! am I destined to betray him a second time?"

"A second time?"

"Did you not hear what he said?"

"He said, 'Judas.'"

"I am the *Judas!*"

"Listen to me. On the faith of a priest"—

The beggar shook his head.

"On the faith of a man—are you satisfied?—on the faith of a man, I swear to you that I will not give him up. But you must tell me your story. Where do you live?"

"I? nowhere."

"Where would you have passed the night?"

"There—on those steps."

"You shall come with me."

"I?—to the house of a priest? Though you guessed so well that I am not what I appeared to be, you do not know that I have a horror of them all."

"All?"

"All, except one."

"Well, I shall try and make you say, 'except two.' Come, come!"

The beggar allowed himself to be led away. They reached a small inn in the suburbs of Meaux. "Has my horse been taken care of?" asked the priest. "Where has my portmanteau been put?"

"Up stairs, sir."

"Show us the way, and bring supper."

Supper was brought, but the beggar refused to sit down to table. He took a piece of bread, and went to the farthest corner of the room to eat it in silence.

"Still *except one?*" said the priest, smiling.

"Still." But the word was somewhat forced. The heart of this man was beginning to soften visibly beneath the benevolent glance of the aged priest. The latter did his best to restrain himself, that he might not appear in too great a hurry to bring about the good understanding which now seemed certain.

He continued his meal quietly; at length, after a rather long silence—"What is the name of that favoured *one?*" said he.

"I will never tell it but to the other—if I ever meet with another."

"If so, tell me."

"You will have it so? Well, it is Father Bridaine."

The priest raised his head quickly.

"Ah!" said he, "Father Bridaine!" But immediately, resuming his supper, he added, half aloud, "I never saw that man, however."

The man thought he spoke of Father Bridaine.

"You say you never saw him? nor I, either. But it seems to me that if I were to see him"—

"Well, what then?"

"I should recognise him."

"You think so," said the priest with the same smile as before. "Come, I have finished supper; will you, yes or no, tell me your story?"

"A price is set upon my head—I tell you beforehand, as well as on that of Paul Rabaut. Now keep my secret or no; it little matters to me. Listen."

The beggar then began his story thus:—

"I am one of those children of the Desert,* of whom you have made Parias, if not something worse, for Parias have a right to live, and that right is denied us.† My father was born under the sabres of your *great* king's dragoons. His father had died on the wheel; his great-grandfather on the walls of La Rochelle; and we had by way of mark in our Bible, a piece of old linen, dyed with the blood of one of our ancestors, who had been assassinated at Nîmes at the time of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. This fragment we were wont to spread out religiously every night, on the page that was to be read, and to say with that other martyr in whose name we are slaughtered—'Father, forgive them.'

"I shall give you no account of the first years of my life. They grow up quickly, I promise you, who grow up under the knife. I was but seven or eight years old when the persecution broke out afresh. This was all we gained by the laurels of Fontenoy. I knew no childhood. Nursed amidst fear and danger, we were men at twelve years old; at thirty, almost aged; at forty, gray-headed—like *him*. I had not come to that yet. I was but twenty; but no one in our mountains surpassed me in courage, in earnestness, and in faith. Was a message to be conveyed through a thousand dangers? —I was ready. Was encouragement or consolation needed? —again I was ready. Our elders invited me to their deliberations. Our ministers looked upon me as one of the pillars of that suffering but glorious Church, entirely built up of the bones of our martyrs.

"And I loved this perilous existence. I might have endea-

* It is well known that this was the term applied in general to those wild and secluded spots where the Protestants of the south of France resorted to celebrate their worship. Thence the common expressions:—"Churches of the Desert," "Pastors of the Desert," "Worship in the Desert," &c.

† The edicts of Louis XIV. and Louis XV. were based upon the supposition that there no longer existed any Protestants in France.

voured, like so many others, to quit a country thirsting for our blood. No one feared less those galleys to which the Protestants, arrested in their flight, were condemned—but of flight I never had even a thought. And do not imagine that this was merely from pride. To those who fled, I said, 'Go where God calls you; as for me, it is His will that I should remain'—and I did remain. In the midst of a province completely crushed, I had created for myself a sort of independence, respected even by the agents of tyranny. Twenty times they might have taken me in the overt act of Protestantism; twenty times they had pretended not to see it.

"Enough of victims had paid the penalty in my stead. Like Job, seated in his habitation, and receiving blow upon blow, the tidings of death that pierced his very soul, I used to hear—'Such a one is taken; he will be tried to-morrow, executed the day after.' And this was perhaps a neighbour—perhaps a friend of my childhood, with whom I had conversed, or had prayed, that very day, or the day before. One day it was my young sister, who was torn from me to be shut up in a convent, and soon after I heard that she had died of grief. At another time it was my brother, who was brought home to me mortally wounded. He had been surprised returning from one of our assemblies. The soldiers had fired at random, and a ball had entered his chest.

"Well, in the midst of this overflowing of troubles, I was calm. Peacefully resting on the immovable rock of my belief, I listened to the billows of this torrent of blood raging around me. Let it carry me away, I thought, or leave me, I shall but arrive a little sooner or a little later there, where martyrs, and those who have deserved to be such, are. Often, in some retired spot of our mountains, I loved to raise the ancient altar of the patriarchs, with stones, and grass, and wood. I perfumed it with thyme; I climbed up to it—and there on my

knees, my arms extended, I offered myself up, soul and body, to the God whose voice I heard in every sound in nature, as well as in every one of the throbbings of my own heart. Those mountains, at such times, were no longer the Cevennes. I had bounded over time and space. I trod in spirit that land sanctified by the steps of Abraham—of the prophets—of the Son of God. Oh! my mountains! Oh! holy musings beneath the chestnut trees of my home! In those times of desolation, ye were an Eden to me—and now, if it were given me to find myself once more amidst your solitudes, ye would be to me a very hell."

He paused. His head sank on his breast: his eyes were swollen with tears; but he could not weep.

"Take courage, my son," said the priest; "take courage! you repent. I do not yet know of what sin; but you repent—that is enough. The Church has pardons"—

"The Church!" cried he, "the Church!—the pardons of the Church! Is it with flames that you would quench the thirst of the damned? It is the Church, the Church herself, and her infamous pardons, that have been my ruin."

"Be calm."

"Her pardons! Ah! I thought I had met with a man, a Christian—but it is only a priest."

He was already near the door. The priest held him back.

"My friend, you do not believe in the pardons of the Church—they have been your ruin, you say. They have often been abused; I know it as well as any one. Come, you believe in the forgiveness of God, do you not?"

"I believe in His chastisements for those who made me fall into the abyss."

"Forgive them, my son. Did you not say that at home you used to pray for the murderers of your brethren?"

"Ah! but they only killed the body."

"Forgive, I repeat, and God Himself can raise your soul to life again."

"Be it so! Thank you. The Christian is come back, and the priest is gone. Let him not return, I entreat of you!"

The priest sighed. Could he deny that there was but too often at the present time, as well as in the times that had gone before, a gulf between the Christian and the priest?

"Sit down again," he said, "and proceed."

"Such then was my life," resumed the Cévenol. "So many sufferings in common could not fail to bring about an entire conformity of thought and feeling amongst us. Few, however, appeared to me to have reached that exalted sphere which God had opened to the aspirations of my soul. It was not that I was proud of this; on the contrary, 'Much has been given to me,' I said tremblingly to myself; 'much will be required.' And it was only by rising still higher, through prayer and meditation, that I strove to act up to the grace bestowed upon me. But if the generality of minds appeared to me far beneath me, there were two in whose presence I felt that I myself was penetrated with higher and holier fervour. One was *his*—Rabaut, the father of us all—at the age of thirty, pastor and patriarch of that suffering people. He did not raise altars of wood and stone; he did not bury himself in the mountains, unless he had to go and receive the last sigh of one of our outlaws, in some unknown cavern; but the ideal devotedness which I dreamed of in my solitude he realized in our villages, a few steps from dragoons and executioners. God spoke to me by the voice of nature in the desert; as for him, God spoke by his mouth. The other—ah! where is she?—has God recalled her to himself? I know not: I am not worthy to know. It was a woman—and I loved her. I loved her as those love who only meet in this world to appoint a meeting in the next. With her I

tasted by anticipation all the joys of that heavenly meeting; and if sometimes when persecution seemed a little to relax, and I dared look forward to the time when the most sacred of earthly ties might be formed between us, it was she who taught me to keep my eyes turned towards heaven. Never was I so elevated by the contemplation of divine things that she had not gone before me on the heights of faith, and held out her hand to help me to climb higher. But the rumour of our happiness had reached the ears of our tyrants. I have already told you, that they would neither take me nor kill me, although they had daily opportunities of doing so. But if there were some who spared me from respect, there were others with whom it was a mere calculation. Dead or a prisoner, I should have been of no use to them, and my example would only have served to encourage my brethren; alive, but converted, who better than myself could serve their projects? But it was felt that this conversion, from which so much was expected, could not be brought about by ordinary means. They devised a blow which aimed at my very heart —Madeleine was carried off. Her parents could not even know in what convent their daughter was confined.

"The blow was dreadful, but I was not shaken by it. I did not even suspect their intention of making me pay for Madeleine's freedom by my abjuration. When it was hinted to me two months later, it was easy to see by my astonishment how far I was from having entertained such an idea, so impossible a thing did my conversion appear to me. I did not even comprehend how any one in the world could have the madness to hope for it. Yes; I was invincible—I should have remained invincible. Priests—soldiers—sufferings of body and mind, I should have defied them all. Alas! I was still outwardly enlightened, but poison was insinuating itself into my heart.

"Whilst my enemies despaired of obtaining anything from

me but contempt for themselves and their religion, shall I tell you who had been their auxiliary? He who was filling Europe with his clamour against them, the man of Ferney—in a word, Voltaire!

"The Jesuits came regularly to preach in our villages. We were obliged to listen to their instructions, and I was frequently honoured with their most animated apostrophes, when they found me unmoved. 'You don't understand your business,' said the colonel of one of the regiments that occupied the country, to them. 'Leave it to me to convert this man. Without threatening or violence I shall make a Catholic of him for you in three months.' They accepted. What mattered to them the means?—the end would sanctify them sufficiently.

"The colonel affected to take an interest in me. He spoke to me of our perseverance in terms almost honourable. 'He thought it absurd,' he said, 'that the king should persist in punishing it as a crime; but,' he added, 'that it was folly nevertheless. Did God require to be worshipped in one way more than another? Were those differences of doctrine for which we allowed ourselves to be put to death so very important after all?' I soon saw that I had to do with an infidel. He was not, however, more or less so than the greater part of the officers who were sent to preside over our sufferings. It will be regarded one day, doubtless, as one of the most awful features of our times, that so many have been persecutors without even believing in God themselves. It was, then, by the path of incredulity that he was going to try and bring me to what he called *his religion*, that is, to his church, to that something, I know not what, to which Catholics imagine they still belong, even when they have in their hearts broken through all the ties that have bound them to it. The interest that he manifested in me, alone prevented me from expressing at first my horror of infidels; besides, I pitied him

far more than I condemned him. His incredulity appeared to me the natural result of a religion in which so many incredible things are taught, and I felt only the more attached to one in which there is nothing to believe but what is clearly founded on Scripture and divine teaching. Soon he adopted the plan of appearing full of respect for all that I regarded as essential in Christianity. He lent me books which did not directly contradict any of these doctrines, but which, putting them to one side, exalted morality at the expense of doctrine, and the virtues of man at the expense of the work of God. I became accustomed, gradually, to attach less importance to faith; I began to say to myself vaguely that since the most opposite doctrines could lead after all to the same moral results, we ought not to be unduly anxious either as to what others believe, or what we believe ourselves. I had not yet seen in practice this pretended morality, which is independent of doctrine. I did not know how much vice and turpitude may be concealed under it. My defensive armour had been broken through, or rather I had suffered it to be taken from me. He then lent me books, which were both more able and bolder, in which incredulity, disguised under the form of simple doubt, covertly attacked the very foundations of faith. One month earlier, I should have put them from me with horror; I read them, I devoured them, and I began to excuse, almost to comprehend, that odious term of 'folly' that my seducer had used in speaking to me of our martyrs. He then proceeded to the master stroke. No more books, but in their stead, pamphlets; no more discussions, but sarcasms. For the first time, the tombs of the old Camisards re-echoed in affright the infernal laugh sent forth from Ferney to Paris, and from Paris to the most retired villages. Two persons, two only, could have still held me back in this lamentable decline—Rabaut and Madeleine. But I never saw him. The

neighbourhood was so vigilantly guarded, that he could not, without surrendering himself, have ventured to take a step in this part of the country. *She*—ah! I should not have required to *see* her in order to remain under her blessed influence. I should have shuddered at the very idea of disturbing the harmony in which our spirits had hitherto mingled; I should have cried out, 'Get thee behind me, Satan!' But fanaticism and impiety were combined for my destruction. Whilst the colonel brought me books, the director of the missions in Languedoc, Father Charnay, brought me news of Madeleine; and these news, by a diabolical understanding between them, were always such as they required to be, in order to strengthen my impressions of the moment. When my former enthusiasm had begun to relax, I had been told that Madeleine, worn out by solitude, was beginning to incline towards a calmer sort of piety. When it was evident that I was willing to renounce my faith, they represented her to me as only occupied with good works. When I had learned to ridicule that which I had adored, she was described to me, not as an unbeliever—no one would have dared to go so far, nor should I have believed them—but as indifferent, almost happy, and ready, if I gave her the example, to open the doors of her odious convent by an abjuration. They said that they had given her news of me from time to time. She had at first been much distressed, then merely surprised, and afterwards rather pleased than afflicted at the change that was taking place in me. She saw in it with delight a way opened for those measures which might ultimately lead to our union. Care was taken, however, not to propose those measures to me openly; they waited with admirable patience till I should myself invite the yoke they strove to lay upon me. At length the colonel spoke to me on the subject, but carelessly, almost in jest, as of a disagreeable step, which,

with my new ideas, I could not possibly refuse to take. I yielded—I signed—I was a Catholic!"—

The Cévenol had proceeded thus far when the host brought in a letter, sealed with a large seal—"A sedan is below," he said, "and the porters are waiting for an answer." The priest appeared much surprised. He read the address more than once. "It is indeed for me," said he. "Ah! the seal of the diocese! Who can know that I am at Meaux?" He read. "Say that I will go." But presently—"I must have the end," resumed he, coming back to the Cévenol. "You interest me more than you think."

"The end is still far off—they are waiting for you."

"Let them wait—keep the rest for to-morrow, if you like; but come to Father Bridaine—where, when, how did you know him?"

"You know him too, then?"

"Yes, but go on."

"I was a Catholic, then, and Madeleine was about to become one, at least I was told so. The news of my apostasy had been received throughout the country with general cries of distress. My father had cursed me; my poor mother had nearly died of anguish. It was now necessary, at least for form's sake, that I should go through some of the public acts of my new religion; above all, confession. I had an inexpressible reluctance to do so. Besides that I did not believe a whit more than before in the absolution given by a man—however sincere and virtuous he might be, all I had seen of priests in general had contributed to render them odious to me. Whilst bowing my head to their yoke, I could not forget their cruelties, their manœuvres; I had not ceased to abhor the authors of those persecutions from which I had escaped myself by my apostasy. It was at that time that I heard Father Bridaine mentioned. It was said that he had

never approved of the violent measures used against us; he would have wished for no other arms than those of charity, gentleness, and persuasion. The evil that our Jesuits said of him sufficed completely, in my opinion, to confirm these praises.* He was preaching at Nimes. I went to hear him"—

"You told me," interrupted the priest, "that you had never seen him?"

"True, I did not see him. The crowd concealed the pulpit from me, and I made no attempt to get near it. In default of conscience, I had still modesty enough left, to make me avoid observation. If I did not look upon myself as a traitor towards God, I could not help feeling myself a coward in the eyes of man. I expected controversy. He did not enter upon it, and I found that he scarcely ever did. Faith, its sources and its privileges, such were, that day, the principal points of his discourse. But that faith of which he spoke, what a difference between it and that in the name of which we had been harassed in our villages, with the noise of drums and muskets! All that he brought forward as constituting Christian faith, I had believed when I was a Protestant; and it was in ceasing to believe it that I had decided on abjuring. Where, said I to myself, as I listened to him, where, amidst these broad and magnificent views of redemption, of Christ, of salvation by His blood, are the Virgin, the saints, purgatory, indulgences, and all that was preached to us as indispensable to believe, and indispensable to practise? He says nothing of all this; and notwithstanding his system is complete. There is no void—no room left for those vain details, which are said to be so essential, to figure even as accessories. I rejoiced; I triumphed. It was the Huguenot that had

* "The Jesuits here are men of iron, who only speak to the Protestants of fines and imprisonment in this world, and of hell and the devil in the next. We have had the greatest trouble in preventing these worthy Fathers from breaking out against our mildness."—Fénélon, *Ecrit de la Saintonge, en* 1686.

revived in me! Alas! it was not the Christian. It was in vain that I allowed myself to be carried away by the pleasure of seeing such homage involuntarily paid to the doctrines of the Reformation; I fell back the next moment on myself, and I viewed with horror the void which incredulity had made in my soul. Ah! if I have since endeavoured to fill up that void; if God has permitted me to regain, in part at least, my former piety, under the rough discipline of remorse, it is to the impressions of that day, it is to Father Bridaine that I owe it.

"It had been announced that after the sermon he would confess those who wished to avail themselves of his ministry. I waited long for my turn; it was night when I knelt down, after twenty other persons, before the grating of his confessional. From the embarrassment with which I repeated the *confiteor*, he knew with whom he had to do. His questions put me at my ease; I ended by telling him nearly all my story. When I came to the means that had been used to bring about my conversion, he made me repeat the shameful tale twice over. 'Poor youth!' said he, half aloud, 'poor youth!' At last he broke out—'The wretches! in order to make him a Catholic, they have made him an infidel! in order to have his soul, they have destroyed it!' and he seemed ready to rush from the confessional. His voice had been heard. The few people still scattered about the church cast looks of fear and curiosity towards me. Doubtless they were asking themselves who the fearful sinner could be that had excited such indignation in him. 'My friend,' said he at length, 'what can I do for you here? It is not by an absolution in which you do not and cannot believe, that I can restore peace to your soul. Will you accept my blessing?—the blessing of an old man, it is said, always does good. Receive it from me. May God do the rest!' I went away, bathed in tears, and"—

"Enough for the present, enough," said the priest, who ap-

peared deeply affected by the latter part of the tale. "Your memory is correct—yes, that is indeed what Father Bridaine said—what he must have said to you, knowing him as I do; but they are waiting for me. I shall not return to-night, for I am going to lodge at—the house of a friend. I leave you my room. Farewell, till to-morrow"—and the heavy tread of the porters was soon heard under the window.

"Left alone—a room! a bed!" said the beggar. "I have long since lost the habit of either; and—if it were a snare? If—but no—his manner was so straightforward. Yes, but Father Charnay, and the colonel,—they, too, appeared straightforward." His eye fell by chance on the letter that the priest had received, and which he had left upon the table. He looked at it in an absent manner; then took it up mechanically, as it were. He did not seem to think that it could acquaint him with the name of his benefactor. Besides, what signified the name to him? At last he looked at the address. The letter fell from his hands. The priest whom he had accosted so eagerly at the door of the church—the priest to whom he had just related his story—the priest, in short, who appeared so curious to hear him speak of Father Bridaine, was Father Bridaine himself. "It was himself!" murmured the astonished Cévenol. "It was himself! indeed—yes—so it is." And all those little details by which he might have recognised him, provided he had formed the slightest suspicion on the subject, returned, one by one, to his mind—

"When I named him, how he raised his head! The second time, how he smiled! At the first words of my story, what astonishment in his looks! How thoroughly it was that of a man who has made an unexpected discovery! When I cited his own words, how he seemed to recognise them! and that I should not have known him again! If memory failed me—my heart! Ah! but why that odious dress? meanwhile I have

gained my wager. *Except one*, I said; and he meant to bring me to say, *except two*. I remain still at one.—It is strange," he resumed, after a moment's silence, "I feel ill at ease here. I told him a price was set upon my head. He does not know why—perhaps he does—let me see. What does this bishop say to him?—Indiscretion; but who has a right to require discretion from me? Let me read." He read—

"You are not, reverend Father, a man who can pass through a town without the chance of being recognised. You have been discovered, and I rejoice that the report has reached me; for I hope you will give me the pleasure to accept a lodging at the palace. Others, bolder than myself, go so far as to declare that we ought not to let you go without exacting more. They say, and I cannot but join with them, that you have never preached at Meaux, and that you can have no reason for refusing us what you have granted to so many other towns. All I fear—and your incognito confirms me in this idea—is, that you have engagements which call you elsewhere. For the present, then, I only ask for this evening and night: assuring you, reverend Father, of the esteem with which I remain, Louis, Bishop of Meaux.

"P.S.—I take my chance, and send you my sedan."

"This is very plain and harmless," thought the Cévenol; "he evidently did not expect this letter. Besides, would he have left it, if it was connected with any plot? I may be at rest, then.—Well, what is the matter?"

There was a noise heard on the stairs. The door was thrown open violently. Two soldiers rushed upon him. He offered no resistance. The treachery of the priest—for he could have no doubt of it—broke down both body and mind. At the moment of going out he cast a glance back upon the room, and muttered, with a bitter smile, "It will no longer be—*except one*."

CHAPTER III.

Louis de Narniers, Bishop of Meaux, belonged to a class of prelates, at that time very numerous, who had never understood, nor appeared to understand, what it is to be a Christian pastor. His conduct, it is true, had not been openly scandalous. Public opinion no longer tolerated in ecclesiastics that barefaced turpitude formerly so common, and of which more than one prelate had handed down, even under Louis XIV., the too venerable tradition. M. de Narniers had never gone beyond certain limits. He had, like others, had his mistresses, but without bringing them forward; he had had debts, but he had paid them. The proximity of Versailles had permitted him to frequent the Court whilst residing in his diocese. At Versailles as at Meaux, at Meaux as at Versailles, he had long lived in great style; but, brought by advancing age to less expensive tastes, he had acquired cheaply a reputation for good sense and simplicity. In a word—in his youth he had spent enormously, in his old age he had accumulated enormously. His whole life might be summed up in these few words. He was now nearly eighty, and for twenty years past his whole affections had been centred in two nephews, the one a soldier, the other an abbé, according to the custom invariably followed by families of the nobility. To raise the one to the highest honours in the army, to secure for the other his bishopric of Meaux after him, such was the one unalterable object of all his toils and

combinations. He did not seem to imagine the least in the world that this was not his principal concern, or that he had been appointed to fill the seat of Bossuet for any other purpose. Besides, he was not ignorant of the weakness that his illustrious predecessor had shown towards a nephew, and he knew how to bring it forward, when necessary, to those who were astonished at his solicitations for his own. If we except this, he was a man of talent and tact. Few men amongst the higher orders of that day perceived more clearly the universal decomposition that was taking place visibly in the order of things around them. It was said that in private he censured the abuses under which France was crushed, with more good sense than any one else. But was it proposed to reform a single one of them? The most glaring had no better advocate than himself. He did not attempt to justify them; he confined himself to inquiring why the present generation should trouble itself more than another about them? "If they did not exist," he said, "it would be wrong to create them; since they do, it would be still more wrong not to benefit by them if one can." This was the mode of reasoning in fashion with those of the privileged classes who had not absolutely opposed the invasion of new ideas, and who wished to be men of their day, yet without quite breaking with the past. Thus, when the old Count de Canaples obtained a regiment for a cousin of eighteen,* to the detriment of several senior officers, he declared, that in principle he considered that nothing could be more contrary to good order and justice; but he hastened to add, that while censuring an abuse, as a citizen, no one is called upon for all that to relinquish the advantages which it holds out. And had not the Duke de Saint-Simon himself, after so much severity of language, succeeded in getting his emoluments, as governor of the Château

* Duclos, *Mémoires sur les Mœurs.*

de Blaye, where he never set his foot, raised from three to twelve thousand livres? Our Bishop of Meaux acted in the same way. He was alarmed, and not without reason, at the general overthrow which any change might bring about; he felt that the removal of one stone of the edifice might lead, little by little, perhaps all at once, to demolishing and rebuilding it entirely. Meanwhile, he enjoyed his comfortable quarters in it. With Louis XV. he used to say—"It will last my time;" which signified, in his mind, "my time and my nephews';" for he could not have endured the idea of a revolution destroying what he had had so much trouble in building up. A thorough gentleman at bottom, there was, notwithstanding, no meanness to which he was not ready to submit, willingly and without effort, as soon as circumstances appeared to require it. He did not consider it more humiliating to bow down before a favourite or a minister, than to bend under a low door, in order to pass. In this respect, people had made a virtue of necessity, and this was the cushion that smoothed every degradation laid upon it. Those who had an end in view, were bound to approve the means of attaining it. Had not Maria Theresa, the empress, called Madame de Pompadour *my cousin*,* when she was necessary to her? Necessity justified everything; and in the eyes of our bishop there was no necessity more pressing than to secure the aggrandizement of his house. Up to the present time, he had reason to be satisfied with his system. It was thus that he had obtained, under the Regency, several rich livings, and, after becoming bishop, had succeeded in retaining them. It was through Madame de Pompadour that he had got a regiment for the eldest of his nephews; it was through her also that he had recently obtained for the other the title of preacher to the king.

When Father Bridaine arrived at the bishop's palace, he

* In 1756, on occasion of the treaty of Versailles.

was received with great honours. His talents and his zeal had given him a reputation which raised him to the level of the bishops; besides, it was known that it only depended on himself to wear the mitre. Benedict XIV. had granted him the sole right of preaching wherever he pleased, without having to ask for the authorization of the diocesan. He had exercised, for some time past, a sort of itinerant episcopacy which all the bishops were happy to favour. The Jesuits alone, as we have already seen, were jealous of his influence and of his success. He had little esteem for the Bishop of Meaux. This was one of his reasons for not stopping in the town, and for wishing to leave it incognito. He, however, met the advances of the prelate with much politeness; but after they had exchanged a few words, he perceived that his host seemed much pre-occupied. He could not understand, after such a pressing invitation, why his arrival should be a cause of embarrassment to him.

"Excuse me, Father," said the prelate at last; "you see me very uneasy. My nephew, the abbé, was to have returned home at nine o'clock; he had made appointments with several persons. It is now ten, and he has not appeared.—Well; no news?" continued he, addressing a servant who came in.

"None, my lord. We have sent everywhere—no one has seen the abbé."

"Holy Virgin!" said the bishop, clasping his hands; then calling back the servant—"Have they been to—*her* house?" he said, in a whisper.

"Yes, my lord; he isn't there."

"Holy Virgin!" the prelate again exclaimed. Bridaine had distinguished the word *her*, and, as the abbé passed for being very little of an abbé in his morals, he had concluded—that which was unfortunately very true in the case of many abbés of the day. At Meaux, it was a thing of public notoriety.

"Has not your lordship another nephew?" said the missionary.

"Yes, the colonel. Oh! as for him, if I was to be uneasy about his absences, I should not often close my eyes. When he comes in before midnight, I almost congratulate him upon it—ah! here he is, I believe."

A great noise of spurs was indeed heard in the ante-chamber, accompanied by that coarse laughter with which the young nobles of the day announced themselves in their moments of ill-breeding.

"Egad, uncle," said he, rushing into the room, "I have had a good day's work, I declare!"—But the uncle, in some confusion, had hurried to meet him, and made him a sign to be silent; then taking him by the hand, and leading him to the missionary—"M. Bridaine, the Marquis of Narniers, my nephew." The marquis bowed, took off his hat, and threw it on a chair.

"Delighted, sir—Imagine, uncle, that"—

"Have you seen your brother?"

"Eh! faith, I have seen him; but let me finish my story—yes, indeed, I have seen him—ha! ha!" and he fell back in the arm-chair into which he had thrown himself, still laughing immoderately.

"You have seen him? Nothing has happened, then?"

"Upon my word, I look like a man whose brother has broken his neck, do I? or who has just sold him, like Joseph, to some merchant?"

The poor bishop began to feel terribly ill at ease. "Henry," said he, "this manner"—

"Ha! ha! scolding?—the time is well chosen, faith! Jacob is angry when his Benjamin is brought back to him!"

"Henry, once more—you see that I am not alone"—

"My lord," said Bridaine, rising, "have the goodness to let me be shown to the room you have allotted to me."

"Sir, sir," cried the nephew, "sit down again, I beg. My uncle would say that I had driven you away."

"He would say the truth, sir," said the missionary.

The other rose, red with anger; he seemed ready to rush upon him.

"Henry, Henry, are you mad?" said the bishop, quite alarmed. "Would you make me die of shame, unhappy boy? Father, I swear to you, I never saw him in such a state—never."

His nephew, indeed, did not always go so far; but he rarely came in at night that the impetuosity habitual to him was not increased, more or less, by the excitement of wine.

"Come, be calm," resumed the bishop, accustomed to yield, and convinced, besides, that it was the only way of bringing the matter to an end. "Sit down, Father, sit down—it is I who entreat you"—"Well, Henry, you were saying"—

"I was saying—faith, I have forgotten all about it. Ah! yes—I have it. Imagine, then, that I was returning quietly from supping with—you know who"—

"Yes, yes, I know—go on."

"What a family!" murmured the missionary.

"When passing near your cathedral, I heard something like blows, struck from within, against one of the doors. Come, said I to myself, some devotee who has fallen asleep over his paternoster; he is caught—serves him right. I went near—'Eh, friend,' said I, 'do you mean to wake the dead? It will not be opened again to-night.' 'What, is it you?' said a voice. '*You*, *you*—who is it that recognises me?' 'Me, me,' said the voice from within. This time, I nearly fell backwards. You don't guess, my very dear uncle? It was the abbé, your nephew, preacher to his Majesty"—

"My nephew in the cathedral—at ten o'clock at night!" exclaimed the bishop, turning pale, for he knew the abbé too well not to be afraid that this adventure would lead to the discovery of some new scandal.

"Yes," pursued the colonel, "it was himself. I know nothing of what he was doing there; he would not tell me. What is quite clear is, that if he had fallen asleep in a corner, it was not in telling his beads. However, when he saw me sneer at him, and ask if he was alone, he swore, swore earnestly to me, that my charitable suppositions were false."

"He swore to you?"

"Yes—no reason for believing him, you are going to say—no; but, by his manner, I saw that he was telling the truth."

"God be praised!" said the prelate.

"Well; but you don't ask me how I got him out of the scrape—a little heroically, you must know. I ran to the baker's at the corner, whose shop was fortunately still open; I armed myself"—

"With a log of wood?"

"For shame; that would have been becoming for a gentleman! A log of wood! uncle, a log of wood! no; a hatchet! and even then I don't know how long it was before I could break open the lock of that cursed door."

"Holy Virgin!—a hatchet!—the door of my cathedral! There would be matter enough to bring on a terrible action against you."

"To be tried before you, fortunately; and even if it was before some one else, what then? a fine subject indeed!—a brother delivering his brother!—there is something grand in that—something antique; and as for the broken door, an old habit, faith! It was amongst the Camisards that I learned to use the hatchet. Are there no indulgences now, as in the good old times, for those who have fought against heretics?

eh? eh? Speaking of the Camisards, you were there, Father Bridaine, in those cursed Cevennes. How was it that I did not remember it when I heard your name? We served together, uncle, together"—

"Not the same master," said Bridaine.

"Yes—I understand you—you served God, and I the king. In fact, the king would do quite as well to leave these matters in the hands of God and of churchmen, for one gets bored to death in those mountains. You don't know what I did once to amuse myself? A conversion—a real conversion, I assure you; not with blows of the hatchet that time—no—a real conversion by reasoning, on my word of honour!—discussions, books—books such as you perhaps have never read or seen—ask my uncle"—

"Henry, not one word more about that abominable affair; I forbid it."

"Then you won't allow me to relate my other adventure of this evening?"

"Is there another adventure?"

"Egad, I should not have cried out, 'a good day's work,' for one only."

"Let us hear."

"You remember the famous convert, my Cévenol, my assassin at Toulouse? Well; he is at Meaux, under lock and key."

"That man is taken?" said Bridaine quickly.

"Taken—as sure as can be."

"Henry," said the bishop, "if it is you who have had him taken up, you are wrong, very wrong."

"Why? can't he be hung here as well as anywhere else?"

"You insist on his being hung, then? Come, another propensity that I did not suspect you of."

"I?—not at all. I did not even think, to say the truth,

that the thing might have such unpleasant consequences for him. I recognised him this afternoon disguised as a beggar—can you guess where?—at the door of the cathedral. I thought it odd that he should have come and put himself into the lion's mouth, and I gave a hint of it in the right quarter. He was observed, followed, and taken at last at an inn, where he had just arrived in the company of a priest—with your permission."

"And the priest?"

"Had just gone out. They will have him when he returns—for he may turn out some vagabond as well; that's all. I should have done better perhaps to let them alone. Bah! what is done, is done."

As we may suppose, Bridaine had long recognised the colonel and his victim. The effrontery of the Marquis had at first only excited his contempt; but now he shuddered at the sight of this man, who had just given up another to the executioner in cold blood, because, he said, the thing had appeared odd to him. The sight of implacable hatred would have wounded him less than such atrocious levity. But contempt for human life had been retained more than we are aware amongst the descendants of ancient chivalry. They were beginning, like other men, to talk sense or nonsense upon the dignity of man; but *man* in their eyes was the gentleman. If a noble, as had been seen several times, even in that century, amused himself when shooting, by firing on the peasantry, he only manifested a little more brutality than others—what many had in their heart!

"But where is my brother?" resumed the Marquis. "Is he hiding? let me go and look for him."

"Go," said the bishop.

"Father," resumed he, when his nephew had gone out, "I should have done just as well, I believe, to have left you in peace at your inn, as to have invited you here to listen to the

follies of my nephew. What would you have? Bad examples—youth"—

"He has been long young, it appears to me."

"Yes, indeed, he is past—thirty"—

Five and thirty, he might have said.

"Bad examples," he repeated, "the life of camps, though to say the truth, he has had but one campaign in Languedoc. He is brave; my nephew is brave, however."

The poor man seemed delighted to have at least one thing to praise in his very unworthy Benjamin.

"Brave, very brave"—

"Alas! my lord," said Bridaine, "brave men have never been wanting in the world."

"Did I say he was nothing else but brave?" interrupted the prelate, already offended.

"He has little respect for you."

"Yes; he is not always precisely what I could wish."

"Little for propriety."

"Yes; just now before you—oh! at Court he is delightful. Very recently, Madame de Pomp"—

"Little for religion."

"I allow—but that did not prevent him from doing his duty when called upon to fight in its defence. But you saw him engaged"—

"Yes, unfortunately."

"What do you mean?"

"I understand my meaning, my lord, and perhaps might be astonished that a bishop should not understand it also. But forgive me, you know my habit of speaking the truth to everybody."

"Go on, go on," said the bishop, with a smile which was somewhat forced. "By the Pope's leave you are free to preach when and where you think fit—you have the right."

"That is a sarcasm, my lord, which would surprise me less in your nephew's mouth than from yours."

"And an observation, Father, that I in my turn might consider. But let us say no more about it. I am weak with my nephew; I know it well enough. But after all, he is not worth more or less than all our gentlemen of the present day, of his age and station."

"That is precisely, my lord, what makes me tremble for France and for Europe."

"Are they then so far below the standard of their predecessors? The preachers of Louis XIV.'s time had no saints to deal with, I think"—

"Never mind that, my lord, our young men are worse—we are worse, all is worse '—

"Come, come, Father! leave that to old dotards—to me if you like, since I am on the verge of eighty—all is worse?"

"All—but let us understand one another. The machine itself is not perhaps worse, it is the same substantially; but under Louis XIV. it was new; under Louis XV. it is old. Then as now, society might be compared to a profligate, but to a young and handsome one, now it is still a profligate, the same, if you will, but decrepit, worn out, and hideous. With Madame de la Vallière, it was only twenty years old; with Madame de Pompadour, forty. Yes, you are right, quite right; your nephew, as you say, is not worse than others. But let me tell you where I see decline, real decline. It is not in the corruption, more or less, of professed libertines; it is in the universal unloosing of all ties; it is in the facility with which every one makes up his mind to it; it is, permit me to say so—for you will not, I hope, do me the injustice to attribute my words to a miserable professional jealousy—it is, I say, in the readiness with which religion itself encourages the tastes and ideas of the day. Immorality, if you

will, is not openly preached, but religion leaves open—what do I say?—throws open every door by which immorality may be admitted. What is required in the present day, in order to succeed in the pulpit? pictures of virtue, which are but a false and mean apotheosis of man; declamations about honour, humanity, —— devotedness—I know not what—about everything which it is easy to admire, without being obliged for all that to practise."

"But," said the bishop, "that is not at all what you preach, I think, and yet you are not the less the preacher the most run after in all the kingdom."

"Yes, run after—as a curiosity, as a sort of oddity that everybody wishes to hear at least once. A dose of strong wine that people like to drink, even though they make a grimace in swallowing it down, in order to enjoy afterwards all the better the sweet wine to which they are accustomed."

"Ah, ah! sweet wine! That comparison is my own, let me tell you. A week ago, if not more, I put my nephew the abbé into a rage with it. He has, between ourselves, been ruminating a sermon for the chapel at Versailles for three months past. He has so thoroughly polished and smoothed away all possible asperities of thought and language, that you do not feel it go down. In fact, when he decided at last on reading it to me—'Sweet wine,' said I, 'sweet wine!' But do you know what he answered?—'It will effervesce all the better.' He has wit and talent, that young man; and now that he is preacher to the king"—

"He can learn how to preach, I suppose?"

"But"—

"It is doubtful, however, whether his Majesty would take a man for his physician who was still at his apprenticeship."

"That is quite another thing."

"Doubtless—the one is for the body; the other is only for the soul."

"You are a rough antagonist, Father. I should like to see you hand to hand with my nephew. Hand to hand?—no, I express myself wrongly—I should like you to give him some directions—some advice"—

"That he would not listen to."

The abbé entered at this moment. He proved to be, as Bridaine had long ago guessed, the orator of the cathedral. But Bridaine did not know that he had been himself the cause of the imprisonment of the nephew, and the distress of the uncle. The beadle seeing a priest go out—we must remember that it was dark—had mistaken him for the one he was waiting for, and had gone quietly away.

"Come, nephew, come," said the bishop. "Here is the chief of all the preachers of France, whom I have been just asking to give you some advice, and who declares that you would not listen to him."

But, without taking notice of this interpellation, the abbé had approached the missionary respectfully. His graceful and gentlemanly manner contrasted agreeably with the vulgar coarseness of the Marquis. Bridaine could not but regret that these two young men, outwardly so different, should resemble each other so much inwardly.

It was, however, with real feeling that the newly appointed preacher to the king expressed his surprise and joy at finding Father Bridaine at the palace. His brilliant reputation, his order of talent, above all his age, prevented the abbé from experiencing any feeling of jealousy in complimenting him. He was therefore surprised at the coldness with which his advances were received. The well-known roughness of the illustrious stranger appeared to him to explain in some measure his want of politeness. When they had conversed for

some minutes—"We shall hear you at Meaux, shall we not, Father?" said the abbé.

"Impossible—I must be at Paris to-morrow."

"What!" said the bishop, "we shall not keep you even four-and-twenty hours?"

"No, my lord"—

"May we ask which of the churches of Paris is to have the privilege"—

"I am not going there to preach. I must not even be seen there, at least for the first few days."

"Ah! ah! if your incognito succeeds as well there as here—but—let me see. Since it is impossible to request a sermon from you, would it be asking too much to beg you to listen to one? It is getting late. I can scarcely venture to—but your experience, your advice. My nephew would be so happy."

"Oh! uncle, Father Bridaine is fatigued."

"I? not at all. Perhaps you are fatigued yourself?"

"Why so? What should have fatigued me?"

He was so in fact, to a terrible degree, for before perceiving that he was locked in, he had again repeated over his sermon from beginning to end.

"Read then, read," said the uncle.

There was nothing left but to give up the point.

"*Nihil aliud inter vos scire volui.*"

"It was I who gave him that text," interrupted the prelate—"'*inter vos scire volui, nisi Christum.*' I preached on it myself," added he, "some forty years ago, before his Royal Highness the Regent. M. Massillon complimented me—'*nisi Christum, et Christum crucifixum.*'"

"Good," said Bridaine, "good; I like those plain, clear texts. This is one which there is certainly but one way of viewing and treating."

Although the abbé could not as yet by any possibility attribute this remark to a malicious intention, he felt that at the very outset he had lost all hope of securing the approval of the aged missionary for the strange sense in which he had taken the declaration of the apostle. Disappointment was so visible in his countenance, that the bishop imagined he felt intimidated. This was not in general one of his faults.

"Courage," said he, "courage!"

He began to read, but rapidly, and in a low voice. The bishop was on thorns. Although he had used the expression "*sweet wine*" in speaking of this sermon, he appreciated it highly; he had a father's, or rather a grandfather's affection for it. He was excruciated at perceiving that the author, who in general read so well, made so little of it. It was in vain that he tried to make him understand how badly things were going on. Now he repeated a word with energy; now he accompanied by a gesture—to which he gave all the vigour of his arm weakened by age—some passage that the voice of the reader had scarcely marked. But it became weaker and more confused. The further he advanced, the more the author felt the singularity of the composition. Not but that he still thought it excellent; but to face from beginning to end the disapprobation of a man who overawed him so completely, was beyond his strength. Two or three times he had ventured to raise his eyes, but he had cast them down immediately, abashed, almost trembling, beneath the steadfast glance that was fixed upon him. Once more he ventured to look up. The features of his judge had assumed such an expression of dissatisfaction and pity, that his courage quite forsook him. At the first words of a page for which he trembled beforehand, he stopped, closed his manuscript, and slowly laid it on the table.

The bishop for some moments past had at last appeared to

understand the mute conversation between his nephew and the missionary. His exclamations and gestures had all at once ceased. When, therefore, the abbé was silent, the poor uncle was as completely struck dumb and motionless as himself. Bridaine, on his part, felt more than he expressed. Secretly pleased at having produced such a powerful impression, so immediately, and so easily, he wished notwithstanding to bring the scene to a close. The more complete the victory, the less necessary to prolong the humiliation of the vanquished. There was nevertheless a long silence.

"Sir," said he at length, "I see that you have yourself already made, whilst reading this sermon to me, the very observations that I should have to make to you upon it. Whether as a Christian, a priest, or only as an author, I know not—perhaps you are not aware yourself. There is one thing that you must know, although a quarter of an hour ago I had determined to leave you in ignorance of it for ever. You shall know it—and may you see the finger of God in it! This sermon that you have just begun to read to me, I knew already: I heard it this evening—I need not tell you in what place."

The abbé thought he was in a dream. The bishop looked at him with inexpressible astonishment.

"Yes," resumed the missionary, "I have heard this sermon, I have heard to the end, to the very end, sir. I have heard the incredible things that you have dared to introduce at the end; and if I had sufficient command over myself not to interrupt you, if I did not cry out, 'sacrilege and profanation!' it was because I had resolved, because I had sworn to find you out, whoever you might be, and to open my mind to you. You have read my thoughts yourself; I need add nothing further. You seem affected; I hope you really are so. I have now only to await the result."

"The result!" stammered out the abbé; "I do not understand you, Father."

"Do you not understand that when we have done wrong, and have still time to repair the mischief, that reparation must be made?"

"Wrong—I do not see."

"Come, I must speak out, it appears. The wrong is, that such a sermon cannot but profane the pulpit. The reparation that I require, and that I expect, is that the sermon be destroyed—that no Christian may ever be condemned to hear it—that it shall even be effaced from your memory."

"You cannot think of it, Father—it is Sunday next that I am to preach it."

"Would you persist, then?" cried Bridaine, rising.

"You see that I must."

"Must cause such a scandal?"

"But it will be a scandal to no one—no one, I assure you."

"Is the Court come to that? impossible. The dauphin at least"—

"The dauphin is not the king."

"The queen that you outrage"—

"The queen is accustomed to forgive many other"—

At these words, Bridaine sank down again on his seat. This cynical indifference overpowered him. The trial was complete. Under the features of the abbé he recognised all that was most hideous in his brother.

"Come to my assistance, my lord," said he at last. "Let us try to prevent"—

He was no longer the same man. His voice was scarcely audible. He no longer demanded, he entreated; and when, from the silence of the bishop, it became evident that he could expect nothing from that quarter, he did not even express

his indignation. His head sank on his bosom, his hands were clasped together, his lips scarcely moved while they slowly uttered these words—"Poor France! poor Church! They are determined to perish, my God! and perish they will."

The next morning when the bishop inquired for his guest, he was told that he had gone out at break of day. He sent to the inn and ascertained that on returning thither, Bridaine had at first been arrested as an accomplice of the beggar, but that upon the explanations he had given, he had been immediately released.

The bishop, and above all, his nephew, were not very sorry for his departure. The colonel wished to follow him, to teach him, as he said, that when we have had the honour to lodge at a bishop's, it is bad manners to run away without taking leave. They pacified him, but without telling him what had happened.

Bridaine then proceeded peaceably on his way. He had not been able to close his eyes. The scene of the preceding evening had left a painful impression on his mind, increased by the meditations of the night. He mourned over society going to decay—the clergy, so unequal to their task; he saw that the very means by which regeneration might yet be possible, were wearing out and destroying themselves. "The salt," according to Scripture, "had lost its savour: wherewith should it be seasoned?"

It was thus, with bitter thoughts, that he proceeded on his road to Paris. The fresh air of the morning, the cheerful awakening of nature, had no power to dispel his stern and reflecting sorrow. Little by little, however, he ceased to be entirely absorbed by it. His mind roused to other remembrances. His imagination went over the tale of the Cévenol. Let us not omit to add, that on learning the arrest of this

man, he had resolved not to lose sight of him, convinced besides that if anything could be done for him, he could do it better at Paris than at Meaux. As to the term *assassin* which he had heard applied to him, the tone of the Marquis and the observation of the bishop did not allow him to believe that it was a real case of assassination. He even experienced a certain degree of pleasure in going over as he journeyed this wild romance, of which he knew as yet but the first half. His own emotion convinced him that he would not have been one of the least ardent in this sanguinary conflict; he forgot the heretic in these men, and saw only the martyr. What a contrast between their obscure heroism, and the indolent corruption of so many prelates!—between the faith of those mountains, and the incredulity of the towns whence persecution and death were sent forth to them! The Cevennes had impressed him by their rugged wildness. He had felt when going through them how much such a home might add to the religious emotions of a people oppressed on account of their faith, and these feelings had been revived by the language of the Cévenol. Thus, though nothing can be more dissimilar than the rich plains of La Brie and the Cevennes, a solitary morning contributed to re-awaken his former impressions.

But he drew near to Paris, and other thoughts began to present themselves. One subject in particular preoccupied him a good deal. He had found two notes at Meaux, at the house of a person who was in his confidence, and their contents greatly excited his curiosity. One was in these terms:—"You will come to me on your arrival, dear Father; I make a point that you do not see a single soul before speaking to me.—Yours most faithfully,—CHRISTOPHER, Arch. of Paris." The other, still more laconic, was as follows:—"Will you be kind enough, Father, to see no one at Paris before me?—Your affectionate—CHOISEUL."

Two such contradictory missives could not but be very embarrassing. It was to the Archbishop's that Bridaine had originally purposed to go; but how affront the Duke by slighting such an urgent request? not that he was disposed to tremble before the imperious minister, but if, on the one hand, he was not inclined to yield from weakness—on the other, he had no reason for not endeavouring to please him in that which did not wound his conscience. He had reached this point of his reflections, when a carriage which had just passed him stopped before the door of a small church. He saw a priest alight from it. This priest, to his great surprise, was the Abbé de Narniers.

Let us leave him on his road to Paris, while we consider what were the events connected with his journey.

CHAPTER IV.

All the instincts and desires of man, whether good or evil, pure or impure, were at this moment leagued together against the established order, or rather disorder, of things. All principles, whether good or evil, pure or impure, in this order of things, were so mingled, that no one could as yet decide what must be hereafter destroyed or retained. Hence the contradictions, incoherencies, and follies of both defendants and assailants. Liberty was demanded, and even before possessing it, it was thrown into discredit by every sort of pretention and every excess of licence. In the morning men preached virtue; in the evening they laughed at it, and taught others to join in the laugh. When speaking to the people, they said *the nation;* when speaking of it, *the mob.* Fénélon was almost deified, but it was as an *esprit fort*, or an infidel. The flatterers of Louis XIV. were stigmatized by those who were at the feet of Louis XV. People spoke with great disdain of *la Montespan*, *la Maintenon*, and yet seemed not to have incense enough for Madame de Pompadour. The lower classes, who had as yet no rights, imagined that they had; the higher orders, who were still privileged, no longer dared appear to believe it. The Parliaments assumed the attitude of representatives of the nation, and the nation, as such, did not yet exist; they in their turn were silenced by the regal authority which was on its decline. In everything, and everywhere, under all forms, scepticism, incredulity, dis-

content, fear or desire, or rather fear and desire united, were manifest.

Buffeted by so many contrary winds, tossed between known and unknown dangers, the crew of the crazy vessel had well nigh come to asking, with the heathen mariners, who should be thrown overboard to appease the gods.

Three distinct powers were in presence of one another—Philosophy, the personification of all the new ideas; Royalty, the symbol and centre of all the old; finally, the Church, detesting Philosophy and distrusting Royalty. While Royalty and the Church united their efforts externally against Philosophy, another union was being secretly cemented between Royalty and Philosophy. The ideas of the day were establishing themselves, if not upon the throne, at least around it. They were insinuating themselves into every channel through which the action of Royalty flowed. Philosophy thought to do honour to Royalty. In some respects this was true; but it required a return, and the reward it would have the most coveted—the destruction of the Church—it did not dare as yet to ask, nor would Royalty have granted it. A middle course had therefore to be sought for. Could something be found within the pale of the Church, and so far belonging to it that to destroy it would be agreeable to the philosophers, and yet not so integral a part of the Church that the sacrifice of the one would appear to be the sacrifice of both? This something existed—it was the order of the Jesuits. It was, then, at their expense that royal despotism and parliamentary privileges were to purchase, not peace, not even a truce—for Philosophy did not promise to stop its course—but the boon of a less active warfare. They were about to be cast into this flood, which had already risen to and touched the first step of the throne. The flood would not recede, but it would perhaps be held back for a time; and were it to advance the more

rapidly afterwards, still it would be a respite. Louis XV. had said—"This too would last his time."

The order of the Jesuits alone, of all human institutions, has had the singular honour of reckoning almost always amongst its adversaries the majority both of the good and of the bad. We say, of the bad, for, as the advanced sentinel of the Church, it was first to receive, and that courageously, every blow aimed at religion, morality, and order. We add, of the good, for by the pride, despotism, intrigues, impure and lax maxims of their order, the Jesuits did immense injury to religion and the Church. The good and the bad had, then, equal reason to be their enemies. Their downfall was certain.

In 1760, after two centuries of skirmishes, more or less animated, the two armies began to form in order of battle. Every day the ranks opposed to the Jesuits might be seen to increase in numbers; their own were recruited likewise, if not by friends, at least by those who felt that the enemy, after passing over their bodies, would not stop there.

They had at all times styled themselves not only the defenders, but the representatives of religion; touch them, said they, and religion itself would be shaken. This assertion, which had long been false, had become true. For thirty years past, the writings directed against them had evidently had a further aim—it was religion, it was Christianity, that was assailed in their persons. Hence the protection extended to them by the bishops, who did not, and could not like them; hence, also, the indecision of the Crown with respect to them. They might have been pointed out, with equal truth, as its supporters and its enemies—its supporters by the spirit of subordination that they diffused around them; its enemies, because their real sovereign was at Rome; and it was clear that, in any emergency, they would be ready to hold very cheap any other authority but his or their own. They had

never sincerely recognised or taught the Gallican decrees of 1682. Such as Loyola had made them, such they might be expected to appear as soon as it should be in their power to resume their true character.

One sovereign had already put his hand to the work. Portugal, one of the most Catholic countries of Europe, had just expelled the Jesuits. Their expulsion, it is true, had been the act neither of the king nor of the country. The country did not hate them; the king* took no part in it—Pombal, his minister, had done it all. Pombal was one of those men who can do nothing, not even good, but by violent measures. He imagined that the fall of the Jesuits would distinguish his ministry, as the abasement of the nobility had distinguished that of Richelieu. His plan was great; the execution of it was an act of pillage.

An exchange of lands between Spain and Portugal had been concluded in 1750. Portugal gave up San Sacramento, and received the *seven reductions*, as they were called, of Uruguay, conquered and civilized by the Jesuits.

How are we to view this civilization, so much boasted of by themselves and their friends, so much criticised by their detractors? Good and evil were to be found deeply mingled there, as in all their undertakings. The savages were nominally Christians, but they had nothing of Christianity but its commonest rudiments, and some Catholic forms. Legally, they were free; actually, slaves. The despotism was mild, but absolute. They had been elevated to the rank of men, but they were kept in a state of childhood. They were happy, in short, and that was something; but it was on condition of remaining in perpetual isolation and perpetual tutelage. Be that as it may, they had attached themselves to the soil that the Jesuits had taught them to cultivate. They understood, though but

* Joseph I., who ascended the throne in 1750.

imperfectly, the idea of home and country. The irritation of the inhabitants of Uruguay was therefore great when Pombal intimated to them the order to quit the country. No agriculturists were wanted. No one thought of anything but the gold mines, just discovered there, and the produce of which they had no intention of sharing with the Jesuits. The colonists resisted. Pombal accused the Jesuits of having urged them on. Was this true? The Jesuits have denied it—whether or not, the crime would not have been great. The question at issue was the destruction of their work, and the brutal exile of more than twenty thousand colonists. What did it signify? They had resisted the royal authority, according to Pombal. Benedict XIV., at the solicitation of the minister, appointed Cardinal Saldanha to institute an inquiry. The cardinal was an enemy of the Jesuits, and a creature of Pombal's. He decided that the Jesuits, by entering into trade, had violated the canons; consequently they were forbidden either to preach or confess, throughout the kingdom. This took place in May 1758.

In the beginning of September, the king, returning one night from the Marquis of Tavora's, received a ball in the arm. The Marchioness was known to be his mistress; the blow of which he had well nigh been the victim, was attributed to the outraged husband. No proof could be found; but Pombal detested the Tavoras. A tribunal, presided over by himself, condemned the whole family to death. Father, mother, sons, sons-in-law, servants, all perished the same day, and on the same scaffold; some beheaded; some strangled; some on the wheel. Such were the proceedings of the man whom the enemies of the Jesuits in France cried up as a reformer, and almost a hero. The confessors of his victims were Jesuits. On the eve of their execution, the Jesuits, as a body, were declared to have been their instigators and

accomplices. Fifteen hundred were thrown into prison, and Pombal notified to the Pope his intention of banishing them. They were sent on board ship by hundreds; they were cast on shore at Civita Vecchia, almost destitute; and these were of the number of those pardoned by the minister. Others, taken at random, were to remain captives indefinitely. Pombal, like Louis XI., loved to hold in his hand, as it were, the lives of those of whom he felt himself to be the master.

Thus had commenced, by calumny and violence, this new period of a conflict, the immediate reasons of which were notwithstanding just and true. The Jesuits had neither assassinated the king, nor even formed the plan of assassination; but they had taught regicide. They had not rebelled against the royal authority in Paraguay; but the principles of rebellion, whether secret or open, were inscribed on every page of their writings, on every sentence of their vows. They had not betrayed Portugal; but were they for all that Portuguese at heart? Has the Jesuit a country? Thus, truer and weightier accusations might have been brought forward against them; but more prudent, and above all, more Christian accusers would have been needful. It is the fate of the Jesuits to commit great faults, and to be unjustly punished for them. But we shall have to return to this subject.

In France, the question was brought forward differently. It was felt, we have said, that they were ready, should the opportunity offer, to become once more all that Loyola had made them; but there was little chance of that opportunity being offered them. The throne was still powerful enough, and was powerfully enough supported, at least on these questions, to have nothing to fear for some time yet from the Jesuits or the Pope. Although there is in reality a gulf between Rome and Gallicanism, the compromise maintained for so many years might last indefinitely. Besides, the Jesuits,

with their easy consciences and pliant spirit, excelled in smoothing down the collisions between a Gallican Court and ultramontane popes. It was not therefore as ultramontane that the Jesuits could seriously displease the Government. Neither could it be on account of the other grievances enumerated against them. As to their morality, royalty had no right whatever to complain of its laxity. As to their intrigues, the throne had it in its power to make use of them on its own account. As for their power, they were quite ready to exercise it, as submissive subjects and zealous courtiers, so long as it was their own interest to do so. Government had then, at this moment, no reason for declaring itself against them; it was in fact only urged to it by the opinions of the day, which it was now impossible not to take into account. But before giving up the Jesuits, it was desirable to ascertain what effect might be produced upon the country at large by the blow aimed at then. The Duke de Choiseul did not like them, but he was not a man to commit himself unless the result was certain. As for Louis XV., he let things take their course. No one in France understood better than himself that the destruction of the Jesuits would be the first step towards destruction of all kinds; but he dared not take their defence openly; and he could not support them secretly, without at once compromising and exhausting the Royal authority. He was therefore glad to rest upon his minister, and the minister, on his part, only wished to throw the responsibility upon others.

This was the reason that Bridaine had been summoned to Paris. His connexion with all orders of the clergy, his long acquaintance with the provinces, had pointed him out as fitter than any one else to give information as to the real state of opinion. But the minister's views did not stop there. He knew that the missionary had often had to complain of the

Jesuits, that they were jealous of his success, alarmed at his influence, in short, that they did not like him ; it might therefore be hoped that Bridaine would concur, at least indirectly, in the plans formed against them. Although he was but a simple priest, the co-operation of a man so pious, and so popular, would be worth that of more than one bishop, and might, in case of need, be turned to account. He had however shown, from the very first overture, that he was not to be reckoned upon too much. The animosity of the Jesuits had not so far imbittered him as to make him incapable of examining the question coolly. If he did not like them, he liked their adversaries still less. At a time when he saw religion exposed to attacks more or less violent, he could not be persuaded that it was the right moment for disbanding troops, whose tactics and weapons he certainly disapproved of, but who, after all, were devoted, numerous, full of ardour, admirably disciplined, and who covered the most dangerous posts with their ranks. It was not, then, to solicit their overthrow, still less to co-operate in it, that he had decided on this journey to Paris ; it was to tell some useful truths to both parties, if it was not too late.

Amongst those who in reality did not like the Jesuits, Christopher de Beaumont, archbishop of Paris, might be distinguished. During the fifteen years that he had held this diocese, he had not ceased to resist the invasion of infidelity ; but whilst he supported Christianity, shaken by it, with one hand, he compromised the cause, on the other, by his severities against the Jansenists, and his quarrels with the Parliament. It was not one of the least curious exhibitions of an age fertile in contradictions to see the depositaries of the law condemn those who executed it. The bull *Unigenitus* was in fact a law. It had been received in the kingdom with all the required formalities ; and must either be abrogated or ob-

served. The archbishop, in persecuting, had the law on his side; the Parliament, in tolerating and in wishing to force toleration upon him, manifestly betrayed its trust. It was one of the misfortunes of the times, that people could not promote good without doing harm, or have reason and humanity on their side without encouraging rebellion.

Before proceeding further, let us give some details of this famous quarrel. It was so mixed up with every question of the period, that we shall be forgiven for going a little further back, in order clearly to explain its origin.

In 1713, after forty or fifty years of disputes, during which it might well have been asked what was the use of an infallible Church that hesitated so long in giving a decision; in 1713, we say, at last appeared this bull, which was intended to bring about peace. Every Catholic from that time knew what he had to believe on the points at issue; the Jansenists, unless they openly proclaimed the right of private judgment, had but to bow their heads, and subscribe. Some submitted; many resisted, and at their head, the Archbishop of Paris, the Cardinal de Noailles. What was to be done? The Pope's course was as clearly traced out as had been that of every priest and every consistent member of the Church: for the latter, to obey; for the Pope, in default of obedience, to excommunicate. But if Rome had excommunicated all those who really deserved it, what would she have had left, and to what would she have been reduced herself? The Pope preferred having recourse to the royal authority. Louis XIV. spent the last efforts of his despotism, as well as the last months of his life, in the cause.

The Regent, whose foremost desire was peace, took care not to carry on the affair; so that more than one recusant, whom persecution would have upheld in his principles, was seen gradually to accept the bull, and to die in submission to it.

The archbishop was of this number. This was in 1729. His successor, M. de Vintimille, went some steps further. Though but little a partisan of the doctrines of the bull, he felt the necessity of supporting it, whatever it was, as a law of the Church and a manifestation of unity. But M. de Vintimille came to Paris at the age of 74, and he neither wished to persecute others, nor to be persecuted himself.

M. de Beaumont, a man younger, bolder, and more consistent, was destined to do what every bishop with sincere convictions would do, if he dared. He forbade the sacraments to whoever should be found without the pale of Catholic unity, or should refuse to enter into it by accepting the bull. We grant that this was tyrannical, but has any Catholic a right to find fault with it? This is the real, the only question. Evidently he has not, unless he assumes also, as a general principle, the right of deciding what laws he chooses to obey, and what to resist; as for a bishop to refuse the sacraments of the Church to those who place themselves without her pale, is not only his right, but his duty. As a man and a Christian, every one has a right to leave the Church of Rome; but so long as he remains in her bosom, he has no right to be a Catholic otherwise than as she understands it. But amongst those to whom M. de Beaumont applied these unassailable principles, he had the misfortune to meet with none but persons of noted piety, exemplary conduct, and in a position to raise an outcry at the measure, from relations, friends, colleagues, great and small, believers and infidels. On the one hand, it was to a poor nun that the sacraments were refused, who had been looked up to as a saint by her whole convent; on the other, it was to a learned member of the order of Sainte Geneviève, whose whole life had been devoted to the study of religion; or to an aged councillor, who had been seen regularly at mass, who was the protector of the orphan, and the

providence of the poor of his neighbourhood! Could their salvation be rendered doubtful by the refusal? hardly; and yet a contrary opinion would have amounted to believing that they could have done without the sacraments, and be saved, as well without as within the pale of the Church. People were alarmed at such a heretical idea; they would willingly have set it aside; but they could not. Attacked in its members and its friends, the Parliament felt called upon to defend them. Was it a matter for its cognisance? Legally, it had no more right to interfere, as a court of justice, than its members had, as Catholics, to blame the severity of the prelate. The bull, we have said, was a law of the land. The Parliament, as guardian of the laws, if it had any part to act in this matter, could reasonably but support the archbishop and condemn the tolerant priests. Far from it. In 1750, several of the lower clergy were summoned to its bar, and condemned to fines and imprisonment. Two years afterwards, the archbishop himself was inculpated. His revenues were seized on. The peers were convoked for his trial; but the king forbade them to comply with the summons. This took place at the time of the negotiations at Aix-la-Chapelle. The importance of these quarrels was exaggerated abroad; advantage was taken of them, to treat France as a state weakened and exhausted by intestine conflicts. The Government, and above all the king, would have preferred temporizing, but it was necessary at any price to show foreign powers that he was master at home. Consequently, a decree of the king's council annulled and rendered void those of the Parliament. The bull was once more proclaimed the law of the land. The jurisdiction of the bishops in the matter of the sacraments was declared intact and sovereign. Upon this appeared repeated remonstrances, in which the humility of the form only made the boldness of the substance more apparent. The Parlia-

ment submitted, but with that affected resignation, which, far more than loud complaints, serves to direct the attention and indignation of a people against despotism. Then followed a new decree, forbidding the Parliament to take any part in this business. On this, fresh remonstrances and threatenings to suspend the course of justice. The menace was soon followed up by its execution: justice was suspended; the courts abandoned; the Parliament met once more, but it was despite of the king's prohibition, to pass a solemn resolution, interdicting the refusal of the sacraments. Such a resolution was a blow aimed at monarchy itself, which could but punish or abdicate. The Parliament was therefore dissolved, its members were dispersed in exile all over France, and some of the boldest, especially the Abbé de Chauvelin, were confined in state prisons. The Government imagined that it could then prevail on the archbishop to be more moderate. M. de Beaumont resisted, and a *lettre de cachet* sent him to Conflans. Meanwhile, the Abbé de Bernis was negotiating at Rome a new interpretation of the bull. Benedict XIV., the most tolerant of popes, consented willingly; but what could he give up? He adopted the plan of diluting all that was most crude in the work of Innocent XI., in a long encyclical letter. A wide door was opened for those who wished to be received into favour. The bull was to be accepted, but each individual would be allowed to a certain extent to determine for himself in what sense he accepted. The toleration and sagacity of the Pope brought it in fact to this, that he authorized what even human morality has ever considered as unworthy of an honest man—mental reservation. But appearances were saved. The Parliament was recalled, first in part, then as a body. It returned humble, but as a conqueror, to that Paris of which it was the idol; and the king, who wanted money, bore the demonstrations of

public joy well enough. People were in good humour, and would not therefore mind paying for it. In the meanwhile, honourable men of both parties would have nothing to say to the explanations of the Pope. The archbishop and the most pious of the Jansenists held the same ground as at the beginning of the quarrel. The one continued to punish, the others to resist.

CHAPTER V.

The hesitation of Bridaine had ceased by the time he entered Paris. He determined on going first to the archbishop's. Night had come on, for he had purposely stopped at a village in order not to arrive in the daytime. As he crossed that square of which it has been said, that it might be paved, and more than paved, with the heads that have fallen there—La Grève—he felt his hand bespattered with something cold and clammy—it was blood. His horse's foot had slipped into a pool, and this pool, as far as the twilight allowed him to judge, was red.

Whose blood was it? What tortures had the unfortunate being who had been put to death there gone through before he expired! for justice, at that period, was rarely satisfied with the infliction of death, or with a body the head of which was the only part wanting. The culprit must be made to feel himself dying. If he entreated a speedy death, justice replied, as formerly Caligula, "I am not yet reconciled to thee." The final stroke was a favour—a *coup de grâce;* for hence this expression, now more figurative and less frequent, but then atrociously significant.

Whose, then, was this blood? Bridaine had stopped; his searching glance seemed to question the pavement under his feet. A few paces from him, he perceived a man who seemed absorbed in the same thoughts; his eyes were bent on the

ground, and he had not turned round at the noise of the horse's feet.

"Sir," said he, "who has been —?"—he did not know what verb to put at the end of his sentence. At that period, blood flowed in so many different ways, that it was impossible to be sure of using the right word.

"An assassin," replied the man, "from what I have heard."

Bridaine, at the sound of the voice, went quickly up to him.

"Is it you?" said he. He had recognised Rabaut.

"Is it you?" said the latter, and added, smiling—"You see that we have met again."

"I parted from a stranger, I meet"—

"Ah! I understand you. My Judas has told you who I am."

"Yes; but do not call him Judas any longer."

"Does he repent?"

"Did you not see it?"

"May God forgive him!"

"And you?"

"I have forgiven him already."

"That is well; but what was his crime?"

"Did he not tell you?"

"No."

"It would be too long, and this is not a fitting place."

"No, indeed—the place—Will you allow me to ask a question?"

"Ask."

"What were you doing near that blood?"

"I was familiarizing myself with the place."

"I do not understand you."

"Do you not understand that when one's name is Rabaut, one may have—some interest—in what passes here?"

"But for several years past"—

"True, for several years past, none of us have been taken; but of those who have, which, up to the present time, has been pardoned?"

Bridaine sighed, and went away.

"Go," murmured the outlaw—"go—go and hide the shame with which the cruelties of thy Church redden thy brow! go—stifle thy sighs as a man! go and make to thyself a priest's heart! Oh, the Church—the Church!—the lamb that has turned tiger!—the martyr that has turned executioner!—the robe once white that for more than a thousand years has been steeped in blood!—My God, Thou who didst repent of having made man, hast Thou not yet repented of having made the Church? Where are the waters that shall sweep her away from the surface of the earth? Where the abyss deep enough to swallow up all her iniquities?—This blood scorches my feet! My God, shall mine flow one day?—The scaffold—the executioner"—

He shuddered; he bowed beneath the burden that his imagination had raised up. His feet were chained, as it were, to this blood, the mysteries of which he had invoked. At length he was able to proceed. He retired from the spot with horror, and yet reluctantly, as if he feared to lose any part of the awful lessons he had come to seek there. All at once, at the corner of the quay, one would have said that the horrors from which he had just fled were again present to him. He turned back to the square; his eyes turned towards the centre, opposite the Hôtel de Ville; he seemed to retrace one of those terrible scenes of which this spot was habitually the theatre.

Three years before, on the 15th of April 1757, he had stood at that very corner. An immense crowd, eager and impatient, covered the square and the approaches to it. The very roofs were crowded. The whole Court, the young nobility, women, youthful and brilliant in their appearance, were at the win-

dows. Nothing was spoken of but the enormous sums paid for good, and even for bad places. Thoroughly sated with ordinary pleasures, these people wished to try something new. They came to see a man put to death with all the refinements legally practised at that period. This man had committed a great crime—he deserved death; but as his crime was one of those, the responsibility of which belongs in great measure to the times in which they are committed, it seemed as though the guilt of the times was to be washed out by the blood of the culprit. Damiens, the assassin of Louis XV., was to suffer, in his person, all that those who had put the weapon into his hand deserved to have suffered unitedly; and they were both those who attacked abuses and those that upheld them—for the former attacked with hatred by undermining all existing institutions, the latter resisted with equal animosity and defended them all. They were both those who rendered incredulity popular by their writings, and those who made these writings popular by burning them; they were those who repeated after Voltaire, "Crush the wretch," and those who, in the name of religion, upheld all the old abominations of the Church; it was the Parliament that set itself up, without any right to do so, as controller of the Court, and the Court that claimed the right of exercising without control the most enormous privileges; it was Louis XV., himself the representative and personification of every anomaly and disorder of his epoch. This is what the assassin might have replied to M. Machault, the Controller-general, who summoned him to name his accomplices, and applied the torture to him; this is what he might have repeated under all the agonies he had to endure several times during his trial. It had been matter of grave and learned investigation what kind of torture could be carried farthest without killing the patient. There had been consultations between physicians, executioners, and

judges. Whole memoirs had been written. The horrible Areopagus had voted *the boot.* Damiens' legs had been crushed by it. They had only paused when they saw him ready to expire; then they had carefully revived the breath of life that remained, and the man whom Rabaut had seen brought to the scaffold was well and almost robust. He was placed on a kind of chair, the legs of which were firmly fixed to the scaffolding. The executioners spent ten minutes in binding him down with cords and irons, so that all motion was impossible. His right arm was free; in its turn, it was bound to a horizontal board that projected from the back of the chair, the hand protruding beyond the board. A brazier was brought and put under the hand; it was filled with sulphur, not charcoal. A horrible cry—one of those cries that proceed from the vitals, and seem as though they would bear away with them the very soul—was uttered by the patient. The crowd shrank back; the gay ladies at the windows retreated, then gradually they reappeared, pale and breathless, with smelling-bottles and eye-glasses. It was an awful sight, that hand, burning without any perceptible fire—for the light of the sun effaced the flame of the sulphur. A black smoke—a nameless stench began to fill the square. Damiens' cries were heard no longer; he gazed now upon his hand, now upon the infernal laboratory that blazed at the extremity of the scaffold. There heated, not M. de Machault's pincers, but the good old pincers of the Provost's Court of Paris—unless, indeed (which we cannot affirm), new ones had been made for the occasion, in order to take tighter hold; there boiled in five caldrons, oil, rosin, wax, sulphur, and lead; there stood five or six tormentors ready, on a sign from their chief, to bring each his terrible spoonful. When the hand was reduced to a lifeless mass, the brazier with sulphur was taken away, and the one in which the pincers were heating

was brought.—But let us abridge the description; our heart fails us to go on. Soon the breast, the arms, the legs, were one awful wound; soon the rosin, wax, oil, sulphur, metal, were seen flowing over those deep incisions. The members of the High Court of Justice were inscribing, after their fashion, the assurance of their devotion to the king on a living volume. They purchased, at the expense of this miserable victim, the reintegration of the exiled Chambers. To inflict on Damiens all the tortures that Ravaillac had endured, was it not saying to Louis XV. that he was appreciated as highly as Henry IV.?*

All was not over—Damiens still breathed, still saw, still cried out, and at intervals he revived, he spoke. Four horses were there; they could scarcely be held in. More humane than the human beings around them, they had never ceased their struggles to escape from this dreary spot, these groans, this pestilential atmosphere. It was now their turn to take the place of the executioner, and to tear into quarters the unfortunate body, on which there was no room left for fresh tortures. They drew, again and again, in vain. It had lasted for more than a quarter of an hour, and the body of Damiens was still entire, and he raised his head from time to time to see them draw. "Ah! those poor horses!" exclaimed, it is said, Madame de Priandeau, the young and pretty niece of the financier Bouret.

* The whole of France had been more or less an accomplice in this hypocrisy. Everywhere the horror usually excited by an assassination had been exaggerated. Everywhere the preservation of the king's life had called forth thanksgivings, which were all the louder because they were in reality not sincere. The conduct of the municipality of Amiens cannot be forgotten, who entreated permission to change the name of the town, so as never to have occasion, even incidentally, to pronounce the name of the king's assassin. It is perhaps less known that the opposition to their petition proceeded from the bishop, not on account of the absurdity of the thing, but because he said the title of Bishop of Amiens (Episcopus Ambionensis) is ecclesiastical property, which no one has a right to touch. The affair reached the king's council, and Louis XV. had the good sense not to listen to it. "Has not a robber of the name of BOURBON been just hung in Limousin?" said he.

Night was coming on. The Commissioners of the Parliament, appointed to preside over the execution, did not know how to bring it to an end. A great difficulty indeed! The sentence must be executed to the letter, and the sentence said *quartered.* The crowd murmured, became impatient, indignant. "The *coup de grâce!*" was cried out, "the *coup de grâce!*" The gentlemen came to a decision, but the sentence must be observed nevertheless. The muscles of the arms and legs were cut—and the horses had the mastery. This was the sight that Paul Rabaut of the Desert, one of a hundred thousand spectators, had witnessed at Paris, in the year of Grace 1757; this was the sight that he reviewed in imagination, at the same spot, in July 1760.

What brought him to Paris? On his first journey, he had seen the Prince de Conti; on the present, he came to see men already more powerful than princes—the liberal party of the Encyclopædia.

Some details which will be necessary in the course of this narrative must find place here.

The magistrates, at least in some of the provinces, although urged on by the clergy, were beginning to be weary of hunting down the Protestants. Besides the odium attached to this office, it had become evident that rigorous measures were useless. The numbers of the Protestants diminished but little; that of their pastors, reduced under Louis XIV. to three or four, had risen to sixty, although, as Rabaut had said, not one had been taken without sealing his devotedness with his life.*

* The following list contains the names of the pastors put to death in France from 1686 to 1760:—1686, Rey, at Beaucaire; 1687, Dalque, at Nismes; 1689, Bertezène, at St. Hippolyte; Poisson and Dombres, at Nismes; 1690, Olivier, Quet, and Bonnemère, at Montpellier; 1691, Roussel, at Montpellier; 1692, Etienne and Paul Plans, at Montpellier; 1693, Colognac, at Marsillargues; 1695, Papus, at Montpellier; 1696, Laporte and Guérin, at Montpellier; 1697, Plans, at Montpellier; 1698, Brousson, at Montpellier; 1718, Arnaud, at Alais; 1728, Roussel, at Montpellier; 1732, Durand, at Montpellier;

These scruples had given birth, in 1755, to the famous consultation of Rippert de Monclar, attorney-general of the Parliament of Aix. Rippert was one of the foremost of those parliamentary writers who imagined they could attack the clergy and their pretensions without shaking Popery itself. The error is an honourable one, into which it is very fortunate that many have fallen, although it is impossible to comprehend how sensible men should still fail to perceive it. He began by laying down, in opposition to the fiery Bishop of Alais, M. de Montclus, that toleration is possible in a religious point of view, and wise in a political point of view. "Civil toleration," said he, "is now not only advocated by all Christian and enlightened persons in Europe, but by all sensible men throughout the universe." It may be said, by the way, that a less decided mode of treating the question would have been preferable; but such was the taste of the times, no one could bring forward a somewhat liberal idea without affirming that the whole universe was on his side. The author showed, in the second place, that the conversion of the Protestants might be despaired of; then, in a long theological discussion, in which he treated the prescriptions of the Council of Trent very lightly, he concluded that the king had a right to establish, if he thought proper, an exclusively civil form for the marriages of Protestants, and the certifying of deaths, births, &c. At length, touching on the more elevated side of the question, he expressed his astonishment that the bishops were not the first to be scandalized at the acts of sacrilege extorted by terror from the Protestants. "What idea do we give them," said he, "of our respect for our sacraments, when we force them to participate in them without

1745, Ranc, at Die; Roger, at Grenoble; 1746, Desubas, at Montpellier; 1752, Benezet, at Montpellier; 1754, Lafage, at Montpellier. Total number, twenty-five; but this list includes only the regular pastors, exclusive of the numerous *preachers*, put to death in the first years of the eighteenth century.

believing in them, whilst we teach, on the other hand, that whoever does not believe in them profanes them?* It would be for the bishops to demand of the king the abolition of the edicts of Louis XIV., by declaring that they can no longer lend themselves to the fiction that supposes there are none but Catholics in France. If they will not do it from humanity, let them do it at least for conscience' sake, and from respect for themselves."

Their conscience, on this point, had been too long perverted. What, in their eyes, had humanity to do with these questions? Had not Bossuet said,† that those who would not have the monarch make use of rigour in matters of religion, are in *impious error?* The Bishop of Alais repeated this, and with him the entire episcopal body of the kingdom. "If," replied the attorney-general, "an exact list were to be given to M. de Montclus of all the Protestant ministers who had been put to death, of all the persons of every age and rank who had been sent to the galleys, of all the fines, taxes, and confiscations that had been exacted of them, of all the children that had been torn from their parents, of all the marriages that had been annulled, of all the property that had in consequence been assigned to collateral branches, of all the persons who had been imprisoned, and kept in long and painful captivity, of all the sentences passed on a number of others, and all the excesses and horrible murders committed upon them by the king's troops, and *contrary to the intentions of his Majesty*‡—this list, alas! would fill volumes. All France re-echoes with

* It is worthy of remark, that the system of outward conformity to Catholicism, with a tacit authorization to remain Protestant, was precisely that of the Jansenist members of the Parliament—of those who refused to sign a formulary in which they did not fully believe.

† *Politique tirée de l'Ecriture*, vii. 10.

‡ Words evidently added to make what preceded more palatable. Louis XIV. and Louis XV. had perhaps been ignorant of many details, but they could not have been ignorant in general of the way in which the persecution had been carried on.

the cries of these unhappy victims; they excite the compassion of all those who glory, I will not say in the name of Christians, but in that of men—and a bishop remains unmoved! a bishop would seek to redouble those cries! Would it not rather become him, after having planted and watered for their benefit, to mourn for them, as the Scriptures say, between the porch and the altar, and himself to pacify the wrath of the prince?"

This memorial had been brought under the notice, not of the king, who probably never knew anything of it, but of the Prince de Conti. A retired officer, M. de Beaumont, and an agent of the churches of the Desert, M. Lecointe, had gained access to him. The Prince de Conti had the reputation, at the Court of Louis XV., of a good soldier, an independent thinker, and an infidel—for the two latter of these characters were at that time closely connected; his laurels at Coni (in 1744) had given him a right to speak boldly to his master's favourite; but he often preferred the licentious epigram to all other forms of freedom of speech. After the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, he had taken upon him to speak of economy, and the advice, no less than the adviser, had given umbrage. He had consoled himself for his disgrace by becoming, like the Duchess de Maine formerly, the centre and patron of all the discontented. It was at Isle-Adam, his favourite château, that his arrows for Versailles were sharpened; but Versailles, the king at its head, parried them at times very well. "What is my cousin the *advocate* doing?" Louis XV. used to say at his levee; and in order to appreciate the full amount of royal irony and aristocratic and bitter disdain implied in the term, the meaning attached to it at the period must be known and remembered.

The advocate of Isle-Adam seemed disposed to plead the cause of the persecuted Protestants. What were his real

motives? "Was it," we would ask with a historian—"was it the blood of the ancient Condés flowing in his veins, that induced their grandson to inquire into the condition of the churches of the Desert? Must we suppose that his inactivity, though a prince of the blood, disposed him to take up an affair that encroached on the king's functions? Must we give the honour to the philosophy of the epoch, to a tendency to cabal, or to a noble ambition? We may hesitate between all these hypotheses, or take them together."* Be that as it may, Rabaut had hastened to address a memorial to him, intended to give him information on the subject. This memorial has been preserved. The details that we find in it, show that the prince had appeared to know scarcely anything of the condition or sufferings of such a large body of Frenchmen. Indeed, in general, no one knew more about them than he did. Who amongst the favoured of the world were going to trouble themselves about what was passing in Languedoc, Guienne, or Dauphiné? In the times of the Camisards, it was worth while; but since the Huguenots had laid down their arms, and suffered in silence, what need to remember at all that they were suffering? Montesquieu, who belonged to one of the provinces the most frequently watered with their blood, had not deigned to mention them in his *Lettres Persanes;* his Usbek saw everything but them—criticized everything but the laws that weighed so heavily upon them.

To this memorial were joined seven petitions:—the release of the galley slaves and the Protestant prisoners; the release of the children who had been taken from their parents; the legalization of marriages; liberty of assembling, if not in churches, at least in houses, and in the open air; toleration of pastors; liberty of alienating their landed property; free

* *Histoire des Eglises du Désert*, by Ch. Coquerel. We owe much to this remarkable and laborious work.

return of the Protestant emigrants. Less could not have been asked for; and yet Rabaut, on his arrival in Paris, had found the prince alarmed, discouraged, and disposed at the very utmost to support only one or two of these petitions; even then, he wished them to be less decided and less direct.

It appears, however, that the pastor had every reason personally to be satisfied with the reception given him; but we have no details respecting these interviews with the prince. We only know that he had two; that they ended in nothing, and that Rabaut left the capital with but feeble hopes, the last remnant of which he had soon to give up. He was returning to Paris. Would he be more successful than the first time?

The interest of the free-thinkers of the day had been turned somewhat earnestly for a year or two past, to the misfortunes of the Protestants. As enemies of Christianity, they could not incline to certain dogmas or certain forms of worship more than to others; besides, they were little acquainted with the doctrines of the Reformation, and cared little to know them. But, from a feeling of humanity, they blamed persecution, whilst from indifference to all religion, they considered it absurd; and from a spirit of opposition, they were naturally led to support men whom they saw contending with the constituted authorities. In certain drawing-rooms at Paris, people were well enough informed as to what was passing in Languedoc. Rabaut was better known than he himself suspected. No one was acquainted with the names of his colleagues; to his credit was laid—and he deserved it—all that had been related of their perils and their devotedness.

The philosophical party was at this moment at the height of its strength. It was about to take up the question of the expulsion of the Jesuits, nor was it doubtful that this point would be conceded. It sought, however, auxiliaries on all

sides. The Protestants were thought to be more interested than any in the downfal of the authors of their calamities. Rabaut, on his first visit to Paris, had had some intercourse with D'Alembert; but their negotiations had ended in nothing. The attempt of Damiens, which the party opposed to the new ideas sought to attribute to those who propagated them, had obliged the latter to be greatly on their guard for some time; the more so, as Madame de Pompadour, their patroness with the king, had been sent away from Court. When she had resumed her place, and the philosophers saw themselves once more in a condition to act, the project was again brought forward of seeking out amongst their mountains those allies, whom they turned into ridicule in secret, as fanatics of another kind, but in whose name they could speak boldly in public—and with good reason—of humanity, liberty, and all that was now beginning to excite universal interest. The course to be pursued, if not the object in view, required much consideration. No doubt the emancipation of the Protestants, if granted, would be a great point gained against the Jesuits; but it was evident, on the other hand, that to run the risk of asking for it before the fall of the order, would be to put a weapon into the hands of the latter, with which it might regain the ascendency. Would it not be giving the Jesuits a right to say more confidently than ever, that their enemies were those of the Church? Would not all the clergy, all Catholics, who were still the enemies of heresy, be seen to rally round them? It was therefore necessary to carry on the two objects at once; to give up either at the right moment, whilst reserving the power of taking it up again; in short, to take no steps without good grounds to go upon, and after an attentive examination of all the resources at the disposal of the party. They had therefore thought that they could not do better than invite to Paris one who was best

acquainted with the condition and spirit of the Protestants. Rabaut had at first declined these overtures. He had little confidence in men whose incredulity alarmed him, and whose favourable dispositions towards his fellow-Protestants evidently proceeded much less from pity or affection for them than from antipathy towards others. But he had long meditated a pastoral circuit in some of the midland provinces. As this journey afforded an opportunity for it, he had made up his mind to undertake it. He had, besides, another project which he had mentioned to no one—that of presenting a petition to the king himself on behalf of the Protestants. He had spent six weeks on the road, sometimes going twenty leagues out of his way, and finding almost everywhere more Protestants and more perseverance than he had dared to hope for. At Meaux, in the last place, he had gone to seek out the remains of a Church formerly one of the most fertile in knowledge and devotedness. He found but little; more, however, than Bossuet imagined he had left. There, as everywhere, the temples of the Reformation had been preserved in the hearts of its followers.

In 1788, after a hundred years, or rather a hundred and fifty years of persecution and oppression (for the Edict of Nantes had been revoked in point of fact long before it was done officially), in 1788, we repeat, there was still a million Protestants left, to hail the era of liberty opened to them by the edict of Louis XVI.

How is it that historians in general have said so little of this miracle of faith and perseverance? If a similar example had been given by Catholics, it would be cited as an undeniable proof of the heroism with which Rome alone can inspire her followers. What has not been said of Ireland! and yet what a difference between the oppression that weighed her down, and the sufferings of the French Protestants! "We groan,"

says a Catholic writer,* "over the condition of the English Catholics. Doubtless they are to be pitied, but their race is not tainted. The Anglican hatred against Popery has not gone the length of inflicting on their families the distressing stigmas of concubinage and bastardy. Their children inherit their property. They enjoy the free exercise of their religion; they have their priests. In short, if the annoyances they are exposed to in their own country seem intolerable to them, emigration is allowed them." To these incontestable details, let us add a fact which speaks still more plainly. In the memorial addressed to the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, in 1748, by the churches of the Desert, their demands were summed up in this, "that the Protestants of France might be put on the same footing as the Catholics of England." Thus a condition which has been described in so many books, which is still cited in the present day as the *ne plus ultra* of oppression, was that which a million of Frenchmen were reduced to sigh after. Many times, under Louis XIV. and Louis XV., we find the English Government pleading for the Protestants of France. What would have been the meaning of these solicitations if France had had to accuse England of similar severities?

* Rulhière—"Eclaircissements historiques sur la Révocation de l'Edit de Nantes."

CHAPTER VI.

About an hour before the time that we have seen Rabaut quit La Grève, a man was sitting in his dressing-gown in a large study. A table loaded with papers stood before him, and upon this table, against the wall, a triple row of boxes. On one of them might be read, *Articles to be written;* on another, *Articles to distribute;* here, *Articles to be corrected;* there, *Articles ready;* there again, *Correspondence.* A large book-case occupied two sides of the room. On one of the most prominent shelves were seven volumes in folio, magnificently bound. These folios were the seven first volumes of the Encyclopædia. This study, with its boxes of papers, was the "vast shop" of which Voltaire styled himself "one of the shopmen," except when he was pleased at other times to call it "the great bear-garden," with which he was glad to be no longer connected. The man in the dressing-gown was the master of the shop; it was d'Alembert.

Voltaire, indeed, was not the only one who varied in his opinion of the great work to which he contributed; but no one judged it more severely or more sensibly than he did in private.

"I am still indignant," he writes* to the Count d'Argental, "that the Encyclopædia should be disfigured and debased by a multitude of ridiculous articles, by a multitude of school-

* April 4, 1758.

boy declamations, that would not deserve a place in the *Mercury*. This is my opinion and faith! I am right."

"I think," says he in another letter,* "that the Encyclopædia will be continued, but probably the end will be worse than the beginning, and it never will be more than a collection of trash."

"I flatter myself," he writes to Diderot,† "that you will no longer put up with such articles as those on Fop,‡ Woman, &c., or with such vain declamations, common-places, and puerilities, which give neither principles, definitions, nor instruction."

Was this advice listened to? "The Encyclopædia," wrote Diderot himself at a later period, "was an abyss into which a kind of scavengers threw, pêle-mêle, an infinity of things, ill treated, ill digested, good, bad, detestable, true, false; always inconsistent and incoherent."

For what purpose have we brought together in this place these confessions, of which similar ones might be adduced from every one of the editors of the Encyclopædia? Is it to prove that it was not a masterpiece? This has been long since fully proved, and proved by the work itself. A comparison at once curious and painfully instructive, would be that of the language of these very men, when boasting of it as a whole, and considering it so bad when viewed in detail. In the former case, the Encyclopædia was the book of books; "the greatest of enterprises; one of the finest monuments of human genius;"§ it was the sacred ark, before which the universe was henceforth to bow down, and which only fools, barbarians, beings unworthy of the name of men, could fail to adore. "No one has any talent but ourselves and our friends," had never been more bluntly set forth, or more mercilessly

* March 22, 1759.

† November 26, 1758.

‡ Fat, Femme.

§ Grimm—Correspondence. Feb. 15, 1759.

applied; never, in the height of her power, had the Church more boldly anathematized those who refused to bow to her infallible decrees. And yet, on an emergency, this party, so united, with a plan so compact, and perseveringly carried out, could even deny its own existence. "What is peculiarly odious," wrote Grimm on the appearance of a pamphlet against the seventh volume, "is the representing the Encyclopædia as a party in the state, bound together by opinions and interests, whilst out of fifty authors who contribute to this work, *there are not three that have any connexion with each other.*"—"A few scattered philosophers," says he elsewhere, "are accused of plotting, who are occupied in searching after truth, without cabal, without ambition, without intrigue, without credit, and the greater number of whom *do not even know each other.*" This was one of their favourite themes in all their apologies. They were seeking after truth—be it so—nor can we deny that in many instances they found it: but it would be also hard to deny, after these facts and others, that falsehood often appeared to them an excellent means of propagating it.

D'Alembert, then, was that day at his post. He was reading a letter, signed *Malesherbes*, the contents of which appeared to agitate him much. He was repeating half aloud the principal passages:—

"In a word, I can do nothing as yet. I understand your impatience, and shall receive your reproaches, even your accusations, philosophically; but I persist in saying that you must wait. . . . I should run the risk of losing all means of serving you henceforward if I consented to serve you too soon. If I wish to continue Director of the Press, I, more than any one, must respect, at least outwardly, the decrees of the king's council. . . . This decree only dates from the 8th of March of last year; so that it is not yet eighteen months since the

Encyclopædia was stopped. After the decree of 1752, which suppressed your two first volumes, the authorization to continue printing was only restored at the end of two years, or about that time. Wait, then, a few months"—

"Willingly," said d'Alembert, "if we could only be certain that then—It would not be after all a great evil. The five last volumes have decidedly been written too rapidly. If the council obliges us to take two years for each, it will be doing us more good than it imagines. Yes; but if it obliges us to take three—four—six? Will it be more favourable some months hence than it is now? Malesherbes hopes—we shall see. Meanwhile Diderot will be furious."

He took out his watch. "These gentlemen are not come yet," said he; "and yet I should wish them to be here before Rabaut."

He returned to his papers. A quarter of an hour after, some one arrived. "Always first, Diderot," said the master of the house.

"Is that intended as a reproach?"

"A reproach!—that is too bad! from me who only give *eulogies*."*

"To the dead."

"In that case I must begin to think of one for the Encyclopædia."

"What do you say?" cried Diderot; "is there anything new?"

"Something old rather. No means of setting aside that cursed decree."

"Bah! who says so?"

"Read that."

"Pooh!" said he, after reading; "that is just like your friends at Court. It is not for nothing that one's name is

* His "Eloges des Académiciens."

Chrétien de Lamoignon de Malesherbes. Wait—four thousand subscribers—wait."

"I should like to know what else you can propose, and above all what you should do in his place."

"What I should do? I—You are strangely cool, d'Alembert."

"And you strangely warm, Diderot."

"If it had not been for me, do you think you would have had there those seven volumes?"

"And if it had not been for me, we should never have to publish an eighth."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, indeed. If I had allowed you to put into those all the fine things with which you wanted to stuff them, never, so long as there was king or clergy in France, should we have been allowed to go on."

"They are wonderfully grateful, indeed, your king and your priests! I wish"—

"Enough, enough, my good fellow. If there is any ingratitude in the case, it is on our side. What! people who might have stopped us at our first page, wait patiently till the end of the second volume, then to that of the seventh, to stir up a little annoyance for us! Do you know that it is very magnanimous, very fine, very Christian"—

"Very silly!"

"As you please. Seriously speaking, do you know that it will one day be a curious problem, even should we be stopped at our seventh volume, to explain how we got leave to go so far? For, after all, we might all be in the Bastile"—

"Ideas cannot be *bastiled;* they pierce through walls and vaulted roofs"—

"A truce to fine phrases; they do well enough for the public—in other words, for fools. Ideas can be *bastiled* well enough."

"Have I been less bold since I was shut up at Vincennes? I remained there"—

"Just long enough to put you forward in the world—as will be the case with our friend Morellet, who will be let out, they say, one of these days. Hark you, this is another of the great follies of this reign: we are just sufficiently annoyed to draw upon us both interest and attention. Our poor rulers have not liberality enough to let us alone, or courage enough to punish us."

"It would be lost labour."

"Do you think so?—I tell you that if they really wished to shut our mouths, they could do it easily enough."

He was right. But the Government had no confidence in itself; and when a Government is come to that, it is all over with it. It was a strange sight to see an absolute monarchy tolerating, and even authorizing,* on the one hand, men whose efforts manifestly tended to overthrow both it and those principles which, on the other, it proclaimed as necessary and divine. But it must be said, that these men were far from scrupulous as to the means of obtaining toleration. We have already said something of their boldness; what shall we say of their hypocrisy? The term is a severe one, but we do not believe it to be too strong. It was not, in truth, altogether their fault. Despotism leads to dissimulation, and even to a certain degree authorizes it. But it would be hard to prove that they did not often carry it much further than a mere feeling of honour would allow.

"Tell d'Alembert," writes Voltaire† this very year, "that he is the hope of our little flock, and he from whom Israel expects the most. He is bold, but not rash; he is born to

* What was Malesherbes, the representative of the king in matters regarding the press, doing at this very time? he was revising for Rousseau the proof-sheets of *La Nouvelle Héloïse*.

† Letter to Thiriot.

make hypocrites tremble, *without exposing himself.*" Voltaire considered this to be praise. In fact, he was assigning to him the reputation of a hypocrite. None of the Encyclopædists deserved it better than d'Alembert, for none of them was so uniformly on good terms with the Court, the princes, even the clergy, on the one hand; and yet none, on the other, in his private correspondence, could be bolder in his ideas, more violent in his resentments, sharper, and even at times more cynical, in his expressions. We are inclined to ask if it is indeed the same man, and almost find ourselves respecting Diderot, who at least knew how to hate and condemn without dissimulation or concealment. On this account, exhortations to prudence, or, in other words, to falsehood, were not spared him. Voltaire, the chief leader, the great prompter of all parts, is sometimes strangely candid on this head. "The devotees will say that Diderot has written a work on metaphysics, that they do not understand; *he has but to reply that he has not written it.*"* And what use did he not make himself of this admirable receipt! How he could deny what he did not wish to avow! How he asseverated, if necessary, the truth of all he wished to be believed! What a masterpiece, in this respect, is his correspondence! There are more forms of lying in it than all that the casuists have ever described. We have but to read. Here we see him indignant that an abominable pamphlet should be attributed to him, which he considers infamous, which he despises, both it and its author —that he will never even read. Let us turn the page—the pamphlet is his own. He speaks of it with enthusiasm; he intends to circulate it by thousands. We go on—he signs

* Letter to Duclos, 1760. Diderot had but to let his friends tell lies for him. They all knew, for instance, that the *Esprit* of Helvetius was partly his work—Grimm denies it, and in what terms! An animosity, according to him, an atrocity without precedent, could alone have spread abroad such an abominable invention.

himself *Christ-moque;* he endeavours to revive his "*crush the wretch;*" he says, "I commend the wretch to you," or, "don't forget the wretch," or some other such form of address; and in the following letter, he exclaims, as in the preface to *Alzire*, "I have been treated as a man without religion! This accusation of irreligion is often renewed, because it is the last refuge of calumniators. I will only ask one question: Who has the most religion, the calumniator who persecutes, or the calumniated who forgives?" He forgives!—yes; but let us go on to the next page. We find him vowing eternal hatred against the calumniator who has but said the truth—against the devotee bold enough to impute a work to him, of which, nevertheless, he acknowledges that he is the author; we find him, above all, laughing at those who will be taken in by his denegations. He comes and goes; he says black or white with such inconceivable facility; in short, he turns so many people into ridicule, that he seems at last to be turning us into ridicule ourselves—just as, when we read ghost stories, we fancy the ghosts are at our heels.

But that in which all excelled, was the anticipating the clamours of their adversaries by crying out themselves still louder, by demanding justice, and that from the Government itself. D'Alembert, so calm in the midst of Diderot's violence, had gone so far, in 1758, as openly to solicit the punishment of Fréron, guilty of having attacked the Encyclopædia. "Only literary criticisms should be allowed," he wrote to Malesherbes. Fréron, in accusing the Encyclopædists of irreligion, had gone beyond his rights; he ought to be sent to the Bastile or the For-l'Evêque. Thus it was that these men understood liberty in general, while they claimed such a large measure of it for themselves. It was sufficiently absurd and inconsistent to accuse Fréron of being too bold; but to wish to have him punished, precisely because he accused them of irreligion—the

very thing of which, amongst themselves, they gloried the most of being guilty—this was a degree of impudence, and, let us call it by its right name, of villany, which has not its equal in all that is related of the Jesuits. Malesherbes made them thoroughly feel it. His answer to d'Alembert is a perfect lesson of justice and propriety. "But," said Morellet,* "when I explained M. de Malesherbes's principles on the liberty of the press to my friend d'Alembert, I could not get him to understand them; and the philosopher stormed and swore, according to his usual bad habit." This trait completes the picture of the eccentricities of the times; we have here the censor-in-chief of the press more tolerant than those who would have no censure for themselves.

"I say," resumed Diderot, "that they would never silence me."

"Do you feel that you have courage enough to be a martyr?"

"Why not?"

"*Why not!*—very fine. This throws *Qu'il mourut*† quite into the shade.—But to return to what I was saying; if but the quarter of what has been done to the Protestants had been done to us—Talking of Protestants, my man is at Paris."

"Your man?"

"Yes; Rabaut."

"Good—and shall we see him?"

"This evening; he arrived this very day by coach from Meaux."

"Have you seen him?"

"For a moment. I told him that I expected some friends this evening, and that I begged he would join us.—You will behave well, won't you?"

* See in his *Memoirs* the details of this strange affair.

† Allusion to the tragedy of *Horace*, by Corneille—Act III. Scene vi.

"We shall try—but here comes one who has great need of the caution.—Good evening, Damilaville."

Damilaville was in fact one of those who, in the light conversation of familiar intercourse, indulged the most freely in unrestrained infidelity; but none could dissemble better, even with his intimates. There were only two or three of them who knew him to be the author of *Christianity Unveiled*, recently condemned by the Parliament.* As head clerk at the office of the *Vingtièmes*,† the seal of the controller-general, which was at his disposal, enabled him to pass the letters, pamphlets, and parcels of his friends free of postage, and without difficulty, throughout the kingdom. His situation and his intimacy with Voltaire gave him a rank in the party, which he would not have enjoyed on his own account. "Good evening, gentlemen," said he, in a tone half cheerful, half sorrowful.

"Your good evening is very doleful."

"There is good cause."

"What's the matter?"

"The matter is, that Desmarêts‡ has been playing his old tricks; the matter is, that the great lady was almost in disgrace when I left Versailles; the matter is, that friend Choiseul is wavering"—

"Good God!"

"Ah, ha! Diderot cries out *Good God!*—

> "La nature, qui parle en ce péril extrême,
> Lui fait lever les mains vers l'asile suprême"—

"A truce to your nonsense."

> "Hommage que toujours rend un cœur effrayé
> Au Dieu que jusqu'alors il avait oublié."

* "Our philosophers of the present day have more wit than those of former times. They have not the dangerous vanity of putting their names to their works. Damilaville is just dead; he was the author of 'Christianity Unveiled.' No one ever knew it."—Voltaire—Letter to the Marquis de Ville-vieille. 1776.

† Income Tax.

‡ The king's confessor.

"Be quiet, Damilaville," said d'Alembert gravely. "Besides, your quotation is not correct. You know that our friend has never *forgotten** God."

"I thought of that. But *denied*† would have spoiled the verse."

"Damilaville," resumed Diderot, "have you done?"

"Yes."

"Well, we are waiting till you condescend to give us some details."

"Details? no one knows any. It would appear that the king was seized with one of those fits of depression to which he has been subject for some years past. The death of his daughter,‡ that of the Princess de Condé,§ the friend of his childhood, continually recurred to him. He was heard to speak of death, eternity, hell. The Marchioness was little flattered by it. In short, the confessor saw there was room for him. He set to work in such good earnest"—

"That the Marchioness is sent away."

"Almost. Alas! she was beginning to be no longer young—and it is doubtful whether the good king would have been so docile, if she had been fifteen years younger."

"Gentlemen," said d'Alembert, "you will grant me that it is somewhat humiliating for philosophers to be brought to exclaim *Good God!* because a king is about to forsake his mistress."

"Or to change mistresses."

"That is possible."

"Is it our fault that this woman should happen to hold our opinions? Ought we to have become Jesuits because she chose to patronize us? If she falls, well; we shall only have to act as if we had never had anything in common with her."

* Oublié.

† Nié.

‡ Louisa Elizabeth, Duchess of Parma; December 6, 1750.

§ March 5, 1760.

"Yes; and if she rises again, she will have but to act as if she had never had anything in common with us, which means, in other words, that we shall stop at our seventh volume. Gentlemen, we have paid too much court to that woman; not you, Diderot, I know—and you were sent to Vincennes. But in short, whether from our fault or not, our cause has been too long mixed up with hers; this is enough to furnish fine phrases upon infidelity supporting immorality, or immorality supporting infidelity, as La Motte expressed it so well in the ponderous charges that he manufactured for M. de Narniers, bishop of Meaux.—It was for the bishop of Meaux, was it not, Marmontel?"

"For him, and for many others as well," said Marmontel, who just then came in. "But unfortunately, M. de Narniers said one day to a humorist: 'Have you read my last charge?' 'No, my lord,' replied the other; 'have you?'"

"That anecdote has already been put down to the score of I know not how many bishops."

"That does not prevent its being true."

"Or false, perhaps. But, *se non è vero, è ben trovato.*"

"You know very well, gentlemen," said Damilaville, "that an anecdote can be true and false at the same time."

"Bravo, Escobar!"

"Yes, indeed. Let the one in question, for instance, be true or false, what conclusion will posterity draw from it, if it should reach posterity? That there are bishops who get their charges manufactured by profane hands. Is that false?* Ask Marmontel."

"What!" cried Diderot. "You too, Marmontel, have had a hand in this matter?"

"My dear sir, one must live."

* Montesquieu places somewhere amongst *rare* things, a charge written by a bishop himself.

"Rather die!"

"I cry, 'Mercy, Puritan, mercy!' Old Boindin,* to whom I confessed the thing, laughed at it."

"And your jargon?" said d'Alembert.

"What is that?" said Damilaville.

"Don't you know? It is a language that Boindin and I have invented to use at the Café Procope when we don't wish to be understood. The soul, we call *Margot;* liberty, *Jeanneton;* religion, *Javotte;* God, *M. de l'Etre.* It is quite as well; for the other day, a certain individual came up to us, and said, 'Gentlemen, may I ask who is that *M. l'Etre*, who has sometimes behaved so ill?' 'Sir,' replied Boindin, 'he was a spy.'"

"Excellent," said d'Alembert; "don't venture too far, though; you might have the *Mercury*† taken from you."

"It is odd enough," added Diderot, "that they should have given it to you."

"Why?"

"Because it is well known that you belong to us."

"Yes, but I keep within bounds."

"So much the worse for you!"

"Let us not go beyond them again, Diderot," said d'Alembert. "I hear a carriage: it is Helvetius or d'Holbach."

"Both, I believe," said Damilaville.

"Gentlemen, you are very obliging to come and see a poor academician, in this way, without ceremony"—

"None would object to your kind of *poverty*, d'Alembert"—

"To accept his poor supper"—

"Where we shall enjoy ourselves like the poor."

"A truce to your poverty, gentlemen," interrupted Diderot.

The two Mecænases of the Encyclopædia were accustomed

* One of the most noted atheists of the times. Voltaire has mentioned him in the *Temple du Goût*, under the name of *Bardou*.

† *Le Mercure de France*, of which Marmontel was editor; he published his *Contes Moraux* in it.

to see him peevish. He piqued himself upon being so with them more than with any one else. They seated themselves.

"I have just received a letter from d'Argens," said d'Holbach.

"From whence?" they asked.

"From Aix—he does not know if he will come to Paris."

"The king* has granted him, they say, a very short leave of absence."

"And played him a trick"—

"What trick?"

"Don't you know?"

"No. Tell us, quick."

"On entering Provence, the first thing he sees posted up in an inn, is a long charge, in which he finds himself called infidel, blasphemer, impious, atheist, &c. Wo be to him if ever he sets foot in the province. The Parliament is ready to bring him to trial—the Château d'If to receive him. Behold him, trembling and struck dumb—he reads the placard over and over again. He dares neither go back nor go on. At last he casts his eye on the preamble: "We, by the grace of God, and of the Holy See, *Bishop* of Aix." The royal mystifier had forgotten that Aix has an archbishop. But it was long before d'Argens recovered himself. He was afraid that it was only an error of the printers, and saw the bailiffs ready to arrest him at the corner of all the streets. His brother† reassured him at last."

"What a pity," said Helvetius, "that he is not here for the fête that is preparing for us! For you know that his *Lettres Chinoises* are to keep company with my *Esprit*."

"When is the *auto-da-fé* to be?" asked d'Holbach.

"Wednesday next, I believe."

* The king of Prussia—d'Argens was his Director-General of Belles-Lettres.

† The Marquis d'Eguilles, President of the Parliament of Aix.

"Good!—just after the representation of the *Ecossaise*, for it is to be acted on Tuesday.* The Parliament is unlucky; on Tuesday, the laugh will be against its friends—on Wednesday, against itself."

"And you will come," said Helvetius, "and help me to laugh; I am going to see myself burned; I have hired a window—a room. I shall cause—but you shall see. It is agreed, is it not?"

"Agreed," said they all.

"Well," resumed d'Holbach, "you know the news from Versailles?"

"Alas! yes," said Damilaville; "but here is one who will perhaps tell us more about it.—Well, newsmonger!"

It was Grimm. He had the character of being the best-informed man in Paris. It was both his taste and his business, for it was known that he was the accredited newsman of several of the Courts of Germany. His correspondence with the Duchess of Saxe-Gotha passed, more or less openly, to seven other princes or princesses. "News!" said he; "ah, news!" and he looked at Diderot. "Shall I give you some capital news?" resumed he, still looking at Diderot.

"Why make so much about it?" said the latter. "We had your news long ago."

"Really! it is"—

"Eh! the disgrace of"—

"Great news, indeed! as if all Paris had not known it two hours ago. I should have thought I was treating you as provincials, if I supposed you did not know that."

"Is yours more recent?"

* The *Ecossaise*, by Voltaire, against the enemies of the philosophers, particularly against Fréron. It had been in print for six months, for Voltaire had not intended it to be acted, nor had he any hope that it would be allowed. But Palissot having had his *Philosopher* acted on the 2d of May, the Government, who had allowed the attack, thought it must allow the defence also. The *Ecossaise* was acted on the 29th of July.

"Fresh or stale, that depends on circumstances. Diderot, there is a volume of sermons coming out."

"How interesting!"

"Stop a moment—and the author is"—

"Perhaps the Abbé Poulle, who has promised us his for ten years past."

"And will go on promising them for ten years to come, if not twenty.* You know what the king, who has loaded him with preferment, said of him?†—No; it is not the Abbé Poulle; and if it was, I do not suppose you would trouble yourself much about it."

"It is —?"

"It is—it is our friend Diderot."

"Come, Grimm," said d'Alembert, "don't keep us in suspense. Are they sermons? and if they are sermons, whose are they?"

"Did you not hear?"

"The jest is carried somewhat too far."

"As true as that we are here"—

"Is it quite certain that we are here?" said d'Holbach.

"Ah! I beg pardon of you pyrrhonians.—Well; as sure as that we think we are here, that I think I see you, and that I thought as I passed through the ante-chamber that I perceived the odours of an excellent supper, the sermons are Diderot's."

All eyes turned towards him; he looked like a man who but half understands—who seeks for an explanation, and yet would rather not receive it.

"Come, Diderot, do you remember a certain priest?" resumed Grimm.

"Ah! the pirate!" exclaimed Diderot.

* In fact they only appeared in 1776.

† Louis XV. had said, in allusion to the name of the Abbé, "La poule est trop grasse, elle ne peut plus ni chanter ni pondre."

"Well; *Habemus confitentem reum.* Since you remember the story, will you tell it yourself?"

"A poor devil, twenty years ago—a fellow whom they would not have for a priest in France, and who got it into his head to go and play the Bourdaloue at Guadaloupe, had not a tolerable sermon in his possession; he asked me for six. I was kind enough to write them for him"—

"At twenty crowns apiece," interrupted Grimm. Diderot bit his lip. La Motte was avenged; Marmontel rubbed his hands: "*Rather die!* ha! ha! *rather die!*"

"The end!" cried out d'Holbach, laughing with all his might—"the end!"

"The end," resumed Grimm, "it is but fair—Diderot does not know it. The end is, that the said priest has come back, and that on landing, he learned what progress our friend had made in his ways—which are not those that lead to heaven. Then, to play him a trick, he resolved to publish his sermons; the more so, he says, as they had great success out there, and this success weighs on his mind as ill-gotten wealth, and that the only means of quieting his conscience will be to render unto Cæsar that which is Cæsar's. Besides, begging Diderot's pardon, he has not the least the appearance of a poor devil, and he was not sent out of France; it was of his own free-will that he went to evangelize our very unevangelical colonists; he rather seems a great devotee. Take care of yourself—the bone is too juicy for him to let it go."

"He shall let it go, nevertheless."

"Oh! you think so?"

"He shall, I tell you. Is he not of the diocese of Meaux?"

"I think so."

"Good—I am safe."

"What do you mean?"

"I know what I mean."

CHAPTER VII.

The last guest had arrived; it was Rabaut. The emotions of La Grève had left their impression on his countenance. Wrinkles, the premature signs of arduous labours and sufferings, were more apparent than usual, but they did not take away from the juvenile ardour expressed in his piercing and earnest eye; he appeared, as it were, an old man in the vigour of his age, or rather a man in the prime of life with the aspect and authority of age. His arrival produced a certain sensation. None but d'Alembert had seen him before. To the curiosity always excited at sight of a man whom we have often heard spoken of, was united, in his case, the effect produced by a remarkable countenance, on which might be read, as it were, all that had been related of him. The mountaineer and the man of education, the humble Christian and the leader of a party, all that he was, all they knew concerning him, was at once brought to remembrance on seeing him. It was therefore with a certain degree of respect that these gentlemen, so little respectful in general, went a few steps forward to meet him. Every one of them, even to Diderot, was impressed—impressed in his own way, it is true, for he only saw a remarkable man in Rabaut; but all that was extraordinary and remarkable addressed itself vividly to his imagination, and his atheistical mind sometimes soared into the same regions as others with their Christian minds. Had it not been for his own pre-occupation, he would perhaps

have perceived the movement that Rabaut allowed to escape him when d'Alembert named him. The Protestant had by no means expected to find himself in such company: not that he was ignorant of his host's connexion with the leaders of the infidelity of the day; but he had scarcely supposed that he would have wished to bring him into the society of a Diderot, of a d'Holbach—in a word, of men against whose doctrines he would have leagued himself with the Pope himself, rather than appear their friend and ally. Consequently it was with some little effort that he replied to the obliging terms in which he addressed him. They on their part began to find him somewhat cold, and even scarcely polite; but they did not even think of attributing it to any other cause than his want of knowledge of society. Protestantism, in their eyes, was but the elder sister of infidelity; as men of opposition, it appeared to them that whoever lived in a state of opposition ought, from that cause alone, to see in them brethren and allies. They well knew that the Protestants had retained a deep and earnest faith; but they did not see why persecuted believers should find it harder to accept them for friends, although unbelievers, than they, being infidels, to join themselves to believers. The establishment of toleration was, besides, according to their views, much less the end than the means. "When I published my *Petit écrit*,"* said Morellet, "d'Alembert and Diderot were enchanted to see a priest turning intolerance into ridicule, being thoroughly persuaded that no one could be tolerant without abandoning all religious principles; on which point I maintained that they were mistaken," &c.

If, then, they wished for the toleration of the Protestants, it was, above all, because toleration appeared to them as a step—a great step—towards infidelity. Strange error! but

* *Petit écrit sur les grandes Questions.* 1756.

which may perhaps help to explain their own intolerance towards all who were not of their party. If toleration in matters of religion appeared to them the giving up all belief, toleration in matters of philosophy might seem to them the giving up philosophy itself.

The appearance of supper fortunately put an end to this mutual embarrassment. On reaching the dining-room, Helvetius, for whom the head of the table was reserved, offered it to the new-comer. Rabaut declined it, but on being pressed by all, he accepted the seat of honour. The surprise was great when they saw him join his hands, cast down his eyes, and offer up a short prayer inwardly. They looked at him, but no one smiled. There was in him neither the affectation of the bigot, nor the timidity of the half Christian, but something perfectly and strikingly natural. He prayed as simply as he would have drunk a glass of water. He soon appeared more at his ease, with some of the party at least. His horror of infidels was not, after all, that stupid kind of horror that certain champions of religion either feel or assume: he regretted not having had more command over himself at first, and did his best to make amends for this involuntary infringement of the laws of charity by an affectionate politeness. Only indifferent subjects, it is true, were spoken of; besides, very little was said. Despite of the common-places of the amphytrion upon the simplicity of the supper, the dishes were delicate and the wines excellent.

"Eh!" said Helvetius, "no one will venture to invite you philosophers after this."

The fact was, that it was he who entertained them the most sumptuously. They preferred, notwithstanding, the dinners at d'Holbach's, where there was unbounded license. "There," said Morellet, "Diderot, Dr. Roux, and the good Baron himself, laid down dogmatically, an absolute atheism, with a

probity, candour, and sincerity, which is edifying even to me, who do not believe in their system." Atheism had become a sort of religion for some men.

"It must be confessed," added d'Holbach, "that Diogenes' cask is sometimes worth broaching."

"If he only had one!" said Damilaville.

These words were received with a burst of laughter, of which Rabaut did not comprehend the meaning.

"Ah! ungrateful!" exclaimed d'Alembert. "Because I have given them tolerable wine, this is the return they make me. You must know, Mr. Rabaut, that because I appear in favour at Court, and do not deal blows to everybody, these gentlemen allege that I keep my philosophy in different casks, and help every one according to his liking. If it were the case, should I be wrong? More flies are caught by"—

"Oh!" said Grimm, "a truce to proverbs. Don't condemn us to live upon air—it would really be a pity. Suppose that Damilaville has said nothing"—

"Oh! the charitable man! he lets me off because the chicken is tender, and he does not wish to lose a mouthful. You don't eat, Mr. Rabaut?"

"I have done, sir."

"In a quarter of an hour?"

"I have oftener dined in ten minutes than in twenty."

"Allow me to offer you something more."

"Do not oblige me to refuse you."

"Inexorable? Well—no more about it. But since we cannot induce you to prolong your supper, you could enliven ours."

"Very willingly. But in what way?"

"Cannot you guess?" said Helvetius. "Relate to us something of your life—some particulars, I mean—some details; in short, what can be related at table."

"But I should really neither know where to begin nor where to end."

"Ah! your subject is quite ready—those dinners of ten minutes, of which you were just speaking, with how many adventures must they be connected!"

"*My dinners!*" said he, laughing—it was the first time they had seen him laugh—"the term is strangely ambitious. But for that, you are right. Yes, the history of my dinners would be curious. Months have passed without my eating two days following in the same house and at the same hour; months during which I have not once dined without being obliged to post sentinels to warn me in case of surprise. For twenty years past, I have hardly ever sat down to table, without making sure how and by what issue I could make my escape. It was well I did so, for several times the house has been surrounded; several times I have been obliged to disappear before the meal was over. Very rarely could I tell where and with whom I should dine on the morrow. To be brief, the list of the places where I have dined, would give you the geography of all the south of the kingdom, towns, villages, and hamlets. In the inns, I took the name of Paul, Dennis, Pastourel, Theophilus, Theo, Tuabar; it is under this name, the anagram of Rabaut, that I have come to Paris. Thus, gentlemen, if ever you should happen to name me, be so good as not forget that it is Mr. Tuabar who has had the honour of supping with you this evening. Many times I have had that of dining with the officers of the Horse-Patrol, with priests, and clerks of the administration. I have heard them speaking of me, of my never-ending journeys, of my assurance in braving them, and of my good fortune in eluding them. I have mixed in the conversation, I have related some of those feats which had duped them. Alas! I secretly blushed at the sad habit of deceit that I had been obliged to acquire. I per-

ceived with regret, on sounding my conscience, that a malicious pleasure sometimes mingled with the joy of having escaped. I have now come to the resolution never to relate these smugglers' exploits to any one, whether friend or foe.

"The perpetual mixture of adventures, sometimes serious, and sometimes ludicrous, is not one of the least painful points in our situation. It would cost me less to risk my life openly, than to preserve it by endless precautions. One day that I was pursued, my friends forced me to assume the dress of a woman. I quitted my disguise when on the point of being taken. I could not bear the idea of being seized in this costume, and preferred losing my life by quitting it, to saving myself and running the chance of rendering my person and my ministry ridiculous. God had pity upon me; I escaped."

"Have you never been taken?" asked Helvetius.

"Should I be here?"

"And you never will be."

"Oh! let us leave the future; and yet, nevertheless, I have often said the same thing to myself. Danger makes us fatalists. One would say, that by respecting you often, it seems bound to respect you again. At this rate, no soldier escaped from twenty battles would be more sure than myself of dying peaceably in his bed. But, once more, let us leave the future —the future will be—what God chooses."

He paused for a moment. They looked at him in silence. "And why," resumed he, "should God be bound to let me finish my course in peace? If He has called me to daily sacrifices, these sacrifices have had their daily reward. Has not God remunerated me largely, bountifully, by the very good that He has given me the means and the courage to do? The blessings of those that I have consoled and strengthened, the tears of joy that I have seen flow at sight of me, these are

inestimable treasures in my past life, that are worth, and far more than worth, the little I have done to earn them.

"One day, after a long journey, I arrived at a village, harassed with fatigue. I found a note there which called me to a spot two leagues off. A dying man desired to see me, and there was not a moment to be lost. I confess that I hesitated. The night was setting in, cold and dark. A good fire, a comfortable night's lodging, a religious meeting, already intimated in the village, all conspired to hold me back. I read in all eyes the ardent desire to keep me, but no one in the house went so far as to say one word to persuade me to stay. I felt then that God spoke to me by their silence. 'These excellent people,' said I, 'are convinced that my duty is to go. They are right; I shall go: I shall do them more good by going than by the best of sermons.' I set out. The road was awful. I had not gone half a league before I came to snow, little at first, but as I ascended—for it was in our mountains—it reached up to the knees. The track of the road ceased: I lost myself. I had no other alternative but to pass the night in the desert, or to return back, by retracing, as best I could, my footsteps on the snow. All at once I perceived a light in the distance. It was the village that I was seeking. It was the lamp of the sick man. What means had I of ascertaining this? none; but I did not doubt it. It was God who again spoke to me by that distant light, and who out of the midst of the darkness, repeated to me: 'I am here.' Yes, He was indeed there, in that house of mourning. What resignation! what faith! what transports of joy at my arrival! The person who opened the door to me was the son of the dying man. I thought he would have fallen on his knees before me. 'Here he is!' cried he, 'father, here he is!' He hurried me in to the sick-chamber, almost beside himself. 'It is he! it is he!' repeated the father, clasping his feeble hands;

and his eyes, already glazed by death, were moistened by a last tear. He was one of the most venerable remaining members of our unhappy churches. He had witnessed the revocation of the Edict of Nantes; he had gone through all our trials, and, as I was told, he had just had to bear one more. A fanatical priest had besieged his dying bed. The threat of his corpse being dragged on the hurdles, as the edicts express it; that of the confiscation of his property, which is the necessary consequence of the former—nothing had moved him. To the first threat, he had replied that he cared little what became of his body, so that his soul went to God; to the second, his children had answered for him, that they preferred losing their patrimony to receiving it tainted by apostasy. This struggle had exhausted his strength. He had now but to die, and he desired to die in my arms. Long before, he had told me himself that this was his wish; for three days past, it had been his only thought: and I had arrived in time—and I was there. Do you understand me now? Think you that one need look to a future reward, when God has paid you thus, step by step, for each duty performed, each consolation given, each word spoken in His name?

"But do not imagine that our enjoyments are limited to witnessing holy deaths, and tasting the happiness of our fidelity. Provided persecution leaves us a few days of rest, we are happy; we know how to enjoy the delights of fair weather between two storms, as the soldier regains his light-heartedness and cheerfulness between two battles. But our light-heartedness consists in a firm reliance on the eternal watchfulness of Him of whom we glory in being the soldiers; our cheerfulness is always more or less that of the ancient martyrs, when, on the eve of execution, they were allowed to meet once more at a fraternal banquet. And we, too, have our banquets, but it is seldom that the occasion is not solemn

and touching. One day, a friend brings us tidings from Germany, Switzerland, or England; must he not have to tell our refugees that he has sat down at our table, in order that afterwards, when seated at theirs, he may bring us before them in spirit, as he has brought them before us? Another time, it is one of our mountaineers, who has spent ten, twenty, perhaps thirty years at the galleys on account of his faith—tired of maintaining him, they have sent him back to his village; must we not celebrate his welcome? Is he not a conqueror returning to his home? Once again, perhaps, it is a wedding feast; but neither songs nor mirth are heard there. What would common-place congratulations and noisy good wishes signify with us? Has not each guest a sword held over his head, and most of all the bride and bridegroom? They have, by marrying in the Desert, committed one of the crimes that are treated with the greatest rigour in the edicts that govern us. How many husbands and wives have been torn from each other on the very day they were united! No; none of the good wishes of the world are heard there. We pray—we are joyful; but it is because we have prayed much. The wishes that could not be offered for time, have been offered for eternity.

"But our real, our great festivals, are our meetings in the Desert. On this head, our history is well enough known; I could tell you nothing that you are not already acquainted with. What I can assure you, however, is, that all that is related of them is rather within than beyond the truth. One must have lived amongst us, to have an idea what a meeting is to our people, where we are to have a pastor, to pray, to sing, to be edified together. Never was a fête at Versailles the object of more ambition, impatience, or arrangement than is one of these humble assemblies, which may perhaps lead the pastor to the scaffold, the men to the galleys, the women to prison or into convents for life. Sometimes we begin to

concert together two months, three months, six months beforehand; all must be informed, and yet nothing must transpire. If we have wind of any hostile project, all must be warned in time, lest some, as has often been the case, should find soldiers where they expected to meet their brethren. Hence an organization, which might be considered as cleverly woven together, but which has formed itself, in the course of time, under the influence of danger alone. If we sometimes require months to combine the plan of an assembly, sometimes also, in a few hours, it is convoked and concluded; often, arriving unexpectedly in some one of our villages, I have had but a word to say, in order to gather around me, in some retired valley, one or two thousand hearers. These convocations are made and ramified with perfect order; the choice of the place of meeting, the posts of the sentinels, all is regulated with admirable art, or rather instinct.

"And yet never, even in times of greatest calm, can we be sure of concluding them in peace; never can one of those who compose the assembly be sure that a ball may not stretch him dead on the very spot where he is listening to us. The list of these sanguinary surprises is already long in our history. It will be four years ago, on the 8th of August, that we were more than ten thousand assembled in one of the Deserts of Lower Languedoc. I was going to ascend the pulpit. All at once, we perceived on a height the well-known uniform of the regiment of Brissac. They fired, and in the midst of this dense multitude, not a ball but told. Some fled, some screamed, some fell against others. The soldiers reloaded their muskets and fired again, four times in succession. They were only fifteen or twenty in number! At a word, I might have had them cut to pieces. But no; I knew how to enjoin that submission which I had always preached—I could even enforce it upon hearts boiling with anger and indignation. We con-

veyed away our dead and wounded; and from the midst of the flying groups some fragments of the psalm that had been interrupted were still raised!

"Ah! how those rude chants of our ancestors go to the heart at such times! The psalms are our epic, but an epic more deep and real than was ever written or sung by any people; an interminable poem, of which each one of us becomes in his turn the author; a sacred treasure of personal and individual remembrances, joys, sorrows, desires, heaped up with national associations—not a verse, not a strophe, but is quite a history or a poem. This was sung by a mother beside the cradle of her firstborn; this other, one of our martyrs sang on his way to death: this is the psalm of the Vaudois returning in arms to their country; this that of the Camisards marching to battle. This verse is the one that the balls of our enemies interrupted; that other, is one of which a father when expiring murmured the half, and went to finish it with the angels! Oh! our psalms, our psalms! who could ever express in human words what your language is to us, in our solitudes, on that soil red with our blood, and under the vault of that heaven from whence *they* look down upon us, who have prayed, and wept, and sung before us!"

He paused. What must have been in the assemblies of the Desert the influence of a man who described them thus, and that to infidels! But for the moment he had transformed these infidels into believers; he had made them envy him his zeal and his faith. The one most affected of them all was the most entirely an unbeliever—it was Diderot; his enthusiasm had kindled at these pictures, at once so true and so romantic; if he had not been Diderot, he would fain have been Rabaut.

"Gentlemen," said the latter, after a moment's silence, and the varying expression of his countenance showed a complete change in the current of his thoughts, "forgive this emotion."

"That will not be difficult," said d'Alembert, "because we have shared it with you."

"I forgot too readily," resumed he, as if he had not heard him, "that I was speaking to men—who would not understand me"—

"It is rather your remark that appears to us difficult to understand. We have, I think, listened to you with"—

"With interest: I observed it, and thank you. You have been affected, as you would be still more, I hope, if ever you were to see and hear what I have described to you, but as you would have been by any recital of the same kind, whether made to you by a priest or a minister, a heathen or a Christian. And you will not the less say, an hour hence, of me and mine, of all who have faith, and suffer in maintaining it—'Poor madman!' Am I wrong?"

Suddenly brought back to the ground of their ordinary feelings, our Encyclopædists could not contradict, yet did not venture to approve, this observation of Rabaut. They had just perceived an abyss between him and them, of the existence of which they were aware, but had imagined it less wide and deep.

"I must confess," said d'Alembert at length, "that you are not, it would appear, what we generally believe you to be. I had a proof of this already, in my quarrel with the pastors of Geneva three years ago, for having imagined I did them honour by representing them as on the verge of deism.* Protestantism, announcing itself as founded on the right of free inquiry, we free-thinkers are inclined to imagine it as calmer, cooler, and more"—

"More reasonable—is not that the case?"

* In the Encyclopædia, article "Geneva." Rousseau and the pastors were not the only ones who considered the article extraordinary. "The whole of it must be read. No one can help thinking it extravagant. Our philosophers are sometimes great fools." —Grimm, December 1758.

"At least more *reasoning*."

"You draw our likeness after your own, gentlemen. In certain respects you are right, in certain others you see that you are completely mistaken. You call yourselves our friends, and you are such at least on one point—you pity us, and desire that we may be left in peace; but you have already done us, and you continue to do us, much harm. You only plead our cause by laying down at the outset a community of principles between us, not altogether without foundation, but of which we bear the whole burden; thanks to you, the right of free inquiry, claimed two hundred years ago as the only way of attaining a real faith, is so generally considered as leading to incredulity. That it may lead thither is evident: every kind of liberty is liable to abuse. That you may be, like ourselves, the sons of Luther and Calvin, in a certain sense, is possible; but if Luther and Calvin were to come back to life, they would break with you even more decidedly than they did with the Church."

"I suppose," said Marmontel, "that we should be at least as eager to break with them as they with us. As for Luther, we might put up with him; but Calvin! I, for one, should be little flattered to be called his son."

"I understand you. 'He had an atrocious mind;' M. de Voltaire has said so; and as M. de Voltaire has been remarkable, above all, in matters of history, for his—astonishing accuracy, this has been repeated henceforth in every book. It is high time, however, gentlemen, that our history should be studied a little before it is written. You, M. de Marmontel, are quite at liberty to arrange the history of the Eastern Empire as you please; you give out your book for what it is—a novel, and Belisarius has no descendants whom you run the risk of injuring by giving them an ancestor after your fashion. It is quite another thing in our case. Since M. de

Voltaire invented this *atrocious mind*, every Romanist we argue with throws it in our teeth. When we speak of our sufferings, we are asked what we complain of. When we mention the word *toleration*, we are answered, *Servetus*. Has not M. de Voltaire said (still harping on this same *atrocious mind*), 'The ashes of Servetus are still smouldering'? This once he speaks the truth. Yes, thanks to him, there are many who keep up this odious smoke, that it may hide from the eyes of the multitude that of so many other funeral piles of which they would wish to destroy the very remembrance. You have all, gentlemen, helped to put this weapon into the hands of our enemies—without evil intentions, I know, but with deplorable thoughtlessness. The death of Servetus alone has inspired you with more indignation than thousands of similar deaths that appalled Europe at the same period. Why so much pity for one man? why such multiplied attacks against his judge, when you content yourselves with vague expressions of horror against the Church that has put to death hundreds of thousands? It is because Servetus was an infidel; the others were only heretics, Christians, madmen. They died for the cause of religion, about which you are quite indifferent; but Servetus for the cause of reason—so you think, at least. As to the martyrs for their faith, so much the worse for them; people will one day go so far as to deny that there ever have been any such, as M. de Voltaire is already about to deny the persecutions of the three first centuries.* But a martyr for the cause of philosophy, or infidelity—which unfortunately is one and the same thing in these times—how can sufficient crowns be wreathed for his brow? how can sufficient horror be expressed for him who is accused of having kindled his funeral pile?

"Is the accusation even correct? Was Calvin really the

* It is a fact that this was one of Voltaire's historical theses. He brought the opinion forward in 1763, with absurd crudity, in his *Réflexions sur la Tolérance.*

author of the death of Servetus? I see clearly that Calvin was his accuser—and who will tell me that he could have done otherwise?—but I see also that the judges were unanimous in condemning him to death. I see that Calvin approved the condemnation; but I also see that all the Swiss churches concurred in the same decision, and demanded the execution of the sentence. Why, then, this violent animosity against Calvin? why do you only plead our cause by paying your court to our enemies at his expense? why, above all, do you not candidly add, that if we have sometimes persecuted, it was not because we were Protestants, but because we were still too little Protestant?

"There is another point on which you come to the help of our adversaries. One of their favourite manœuvres is to represent us as professing a religion *founded* by Luther and Calvin. They well know that these two great men uniformly disclaimed the having founded anything themselves, or taught anything in their own name. 'Was I crucified for you?' said Luther to those who assumed the name of Lutherans. They well know that we only believe what the Bible appears to us to teach, and by no means because Luther or Calvin has said so; and yet they do not the less persist in representing our religion as having had its origin in the brain of these men —our teachers as their slaves, our people as their worshippers. Well; what they do from dishonesty, you do from—what shall I call it? Find a word yourselves; I appeal to your own consciences. Never having sought to know exactly in what we differ from the Romanists, you confine yourselves to making us out in general as sectarians—the followers of Luther and Calvin, as the Turks are of Mahomet; and this stale calumny, which we feel more than any other, which sanctions in the eyes of the multitude every kind of antipathy and severity against us—it is you who authorize it.

"What harm has not the sedate M. de Montesquieu done us, in another point of view! Now, with his theory of the influence of climate, he maintains that the North is the home of Protestantism and Republicanism; whence our adversaries draw the conclusion that, in the first place, our religion cannot suit France; in the next, that we cannot be faithful subjects to the king. Again, according to him, all religions that are oppressed, become in their turn the *oppressors*, as soon as they have shaken off the yoke; whence our adversaries cry out, that when we gain our liberty, we shall persecute in our turn. Again: 'When a religion is established in a country,' says he, 'it ought to be tolerated; when it has not been recognised, it is unadvisable to recognise it;' whence our adversaries demonstrate that we have not been, and therefore ought not to be recognised, and that it would be folly to allow of our existence. Thus it is that so much injury is done to us, even with the best intentions, because men will not take the trouble to examine into what we are, what we believe, and what we ask for.

"And after all, what are your insults to us and our history compared to those against Christianity itself, with which we have to reproach you? In the first place, when you attack the errors, abuses, and cruelties of the Church of Rome, you very rarely discriminate clearly between this corrupt Christianity and that of the first centuries. It is not your fault if the apostles, if Jesus Christ Himself, are not generally considered as the founders of the Papal despotism, the Inquisition, and all that is most absurd and odious which mankind has taught in their name. Yet you are acquainted with the sacred writings. You have read them—to criticize them, it is true; but nevertheless you have read them. Consequently you know much better than the generality of Romanists that even the germ of these abuses is far from being found there;

and yet you persist, notwithstanding, in throwing upon the Christian religion itself all the odium and absurdity of these additions made to it. It would seem as though the Church overawed you, that you dared not attack her alone, and that you require, in order to give you courage, to aim at everything that is sacred the same blows that are intended for her."

"But," objected d'Holbach, "you reproach us with not bringing forward clearly enough a distinction which you well know that we do not admit. The Bible is better than the Church, we grant you; but the one is not more sacred to us than the other."

"I know it," resumed he; "therefore it is not in the name of the Bible—since you do not believe in it, nor in the name of God—since you do not believe Him to be the author of the Bible—that we call upon you to be more candid and consistent. There is in this case, independently of the religious question, a merely human question—a mere matter of honesty. You see the Christian world divided into two parties. In the one, you as well as ourselves perceive manifold errors, manifold abuses; in the other, you only see, on the altar, a book where these errors are not to be found—where these abuses are condemned. What matter if this book appears to you to teach other errors? Justice forbids casting upon it the responsibility of all those which can only have been promulgated either by forgetting it or trampling it under foot. Still more decidedly does justice forbid it, if there are those for whom this distinction is a question of life or death. You ask for toleration for us—so far well; but why not say distinctly that we appear to you nearer the truth, more rational, in a word, more Christian—although the latter term may not appear one of praise to you, I say, more Christian—than those who oppress us?"

"We should do you more harm than good," said Helvetius.

"In that case your enemies might say that Protestantism was the sister of infidelity."

"Never mind what might happen," resumed the minister. "If ever the day should come, that all those who are not Romanists have the candour to say—it matters not with what feeling—that Protestantism appears to them more rational and more Christian than Romanism, Protestantism, despite of you, would then have made immense progress in the world. The multitude would begin to inquire what we believe. 'Take and read,' we should reply; 'here is the Bible.' And they would take it, and they would read it; and the religion they would arrive at would be the religion of the Bible—it would be our religion. It is thus that you could serve our cause, rather than by demanding for us, as you would for Jews, Mahometans, or Pagans, a precarious and insulting toleration."

"The Bible! always the Bible!" murmured some of d'Alembert's friends. "You think, then, that it is all-powerful?"

"If we are mistaken, gentlemen, you will allow that the error is excusable in people to whom this book has given courage to suffer so much."

"It can do much," replied they, "that is evident; but only for those who believe in it."

"Undoubtedly; but all may attain to that belief."

"Why then do we not attain to it?"

"Why? because you will not; because there are times when God is pleased to blind the wise of this world, or to allow them to be blinded; because we are now at one of those fatal periods, and we shall not come out of it until we have drunk to the very dregs the bitter cup that you are preparing for humanity. This appears very mystical to you, does it not? Therefore I shall not try to persuade you to admit it, or even understand it: I should not succeed. God's designs must be accomplished. But a time will come, believe me, a time

will come when nothing will be more clear than these words which now appear so obscure. If they could be engraven there, on that wall, they would shine forth, a hundred years hence, with fearful lustre, and that light would pierce through every eyelid. Then, the emptiness of the doctrines you profess will be acknowledged. Then, your inability to found anything durable will be attested by the ruins of all you thought to build up. Then, infidels themselves (for there will always be found such) will disclaim resemblance to you. And through all the storms that must be traversed before reaching that period, whether free or oppressed, persecuted or not, none will be really happy in the end but those who have trusted in God rather than in man—in this book."

He had just laid hold of an old Bible of Sacy's, that stood beside the seven volumes, for they had returned to the library.

"In this book," I say, "and not"—

"Not in those, you would say?" said Helvetius, pointing to the seven. "Courage—finish the sentence. Well, gentlemen, he is not wrong, perhaps. M. de Fontenelle said once, 'The Bible may perhaps outlive us all.'"

And Rabaut, who had rapidly turned the leaves, placing the book on his knees, clasped his hands; then with a slow and solemn voice read:—"At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight." *

It was not the first time that Rabaut had expressed these fears, these reproaches, these hopes, we had almost said these prophecies. His correspondence abounds in hints of this kind. No one at that period judged the present so correctly, or foresaw the future so clearly.

* Matt. xi. 25, 26.

The future has shown that he was right. The eighteenth century has accomplished its work, and we are not of those who only condemn it—for if it has overthrown much, there was much to overthrow; but that, as Rabaut foretold, it was powerless to build up, is now universally acknowledged and confessed. "Infidels themselves," he had said, "will disclaim such incredulity as yours;" and indeed few are to be found in the present day, who would go the lengths of Voltaire, d'Holbach, or Lamettrie. A few old men who have forgotten nothing of the past, and learned nothing from the present, are the only Voltairians that we have remaining; some obscure communists are the only direct representatives of the materialism and atheism of that day. All intelligent men, men of feeling and education, whether believers or not, openly declare that they desire to strike out for themselves other paths, and to belong as little as possible to that family without a future.

In the midst of these changes, one thing alone has remained the same. All the reproaches that Rabaut, as a Protestant, addressed to the liberals of his epoch, might again be brought forward by the Protestants of the present day.

Take—in France for instance—twenty or thirty new works, never mind which, serious or not—history, novels, treatises on any subject whatever. How many out of this number are professedly Romanist? Three or four. How many of them are so in reality, that is to say, how many whose authors submit fully and sincerely to the authority of their Church, and not merely in words and in theory? One or two; and even then, in most cases, we feel that we must not examine too closely, and that the author, in fact, admits only what suits his purpose. How many, on the other hand, do we find, still out of the same number, who openly declare themselves unbelievers? One or two. How many who, without openly professing in-

fidelity, may still be considered as hostile to Christianity? Three or four. Thus, the great majority of authors, while they admit the truth of Christianity, yet openly use the right of admitting it according to their own interpretation.

Now this is the very right claimed by the Reformation. To make use of it in any measure, is to admit the vital and fundamental principle of Protestantism; it is to be a Protestant, even although remaining faithful, nevertheless, to certain Romanist dogmas. And yet, amongst the numerous writers who use this right—often, it is true, indiscriminately, but this should be, it might be thought, an additional reason for allowing the principle—amongst these writers, we say, how many are there who stretch out a hand to Protestants? how many do we meet with who have the candour to say, "We are no longer Romanists, we renounce the Romish Church," and to express a little sympathy with those who renounced it when there was danger in so doing? Generally speaking, not one.

Why so? With some, from timidity. They venture to attack, one after the other, all the foundations and all the doctrines of the Church; but they persist in assuming an appearance of respect for the Church individually. An end would soon be put to this strange contradiction if the Church herself were to clear up the matter. If she were to tell these people distinctly what she thinks of them, they would be forced to confess that they have ceased to belong to her, or that they never have belonged to her. But she is too prudent to provoke an explanation. So long as those who abandon her do not sound the trumpet, she will never ring the alarm bell. All she asks is, that you do not go out by the great breach made by Luther. Set that aside, and you may go out as you will: her sentinels have orders not to see you pass. It is still, though under different aspects, it is still the same

spirit that sent to death the courageous preachers of the Desert, and left undisturbed, save for some insignificant severities, the leaders of infidelity.

Next to the timid, we have the superficial, those who, though completely separated from Romanism on all essential points, hold to it, or imagine they hold to it, by outward forms. They do not believe in the Pope; but St. Peter's at Rome is such a magnificent temple! They do not believe in the mass; but a grand musical mass is such a fine thing! They believe, in short, nothing that Protestants reject; but the Protestant Churches are so cold, so bare! How is it possible to profess one's-self a Protestant? This leads to a fresh contradiction which the Church takes care not to clear up. Grant that she is beautiful, and she will not inquire whether you think her good; if needful, she will even allow you to deny it.

Lastly, we have the ignorant, and they are by far the greater number. It is astonishing to see to how many men, and above all, to what kind of men, the term may be applied, without having the slightest difficulty in proving that they deserve it. It may be a historian who throws floods of light on the most insignificant facts of the Middle Ages, and is satisfied in what concerns the Reformation with what may be read in the poorest manuals; or it may be a man styling himself a Christian philosopher, and who, in remodelling Christianity upon the Bible, does not seem to perceive in the least that this was the work of the Reformers. He will perhaps proceed on the same track with them for some hundred pages, without remarking it, without suspecting it; well if he does not pause from time to time to throw his stone at them—to call them heresiarchs and innovators. Here we have a writer, at home on every other subject, and yet, as soon as he takes up a Protestant question, lets out as many errors as words; there a novelist, and one of the best, who will describe with com-

placency a thoroughly evangelical Christian, detesting superstition, despising vain forms, reading and studying the Bible, rejecting all human authority in religion; in a word, a complete Protestant, and yet he is the last to perceive that it is a Protestant that he has been describing. In the eyes of the one, Protestantism is nothing more than the caprices of Henry VIII.; in those of the other, nothing more than the predestination of Calvin; to many, as in Voltaire's time, the stake to which Servetus was bound. Setting aside such views, they understand nothing about it; they know nothing about it; they have not even an idea that they could or ought to know more. And thus it is that so many people are Protestants without suspecting it themselves; thus it is, that millions continue to move on, under the banner of Rome, who are no longer Roman Catholics, and who have no wish, no possibility of returning to the Church.

Amongst those who, directly or above all indirectly, attack Christianity, there are not a few who deserve, as in the last century, the reproach of confounding the form with the substance; of not distinguishing, or at least of distinguishing too rarely, too vaguely, between Christianity as it is and Christianity as it was. Protestantism, inasmuch as it is one of the forms of the Christian religion, has often to encounter the same blows as its adversary. It is obliged to bear the blame of the faults it has never committed, and the errors it has never ceased to combat. With many, it lies under the weight of a multitude of objections and prejudices against religion, manifestly arising out of the abuses of Romanism. This is chiefly observable in France, amongst the class of persons to whom the colporteurs and evangelists address themselves. They are always repulsed with horror at first; but when the Romanist surface has been broken through, much more of infidelity than of Romanism is to be found beneath

it. They have not to change Romanists into Protestants, but infidels into believers.

And this leads us to a final reflection. If there are those who reject Protestantism because they are too Roman Catholic, there are also many, perhaps even more, who reject it because they are not Roman Catholic enough. They are accustomed, in fact, not to believe at all, or least to believe feebly, vaguely, externally, without inquiring what they do believe. Religion to such minds is like an inconvenient house, several rooms of which they have deserted, in order to lodge in those where they may be the least uncomfortable, but which they have no idea of leaving, still less of throwing down, in order, like Descartes, to see if the foundations are good. In spite of its endless ceremonies—from which, however, people exempt themselves as they please—Romanism is, as regards matters of faith, the easiest of all religions. In this respect there is nothing to do, nothing to seek. You receive your outfit at your birth; you are by no means responsible for what it does or does not contain. Some courage would be required to make out an inventory; and that kind of courage is rare in times of indifference.

This is the sense in which we have just said that one of the reasons for not becoming Protestants, is, that people are too little Romanist. Was it not at the period when bigotry was at its height, in the sixteenth century, that one-half of Europe ceased to be Roman Catholic, and that the whole of Europe very nearly did the same? It is in vain that Protestantism is represented as the right to believe *what we choose*, or not to believe at all if we choose. The abuse of it may have led to this with some; but the best proof that in truth this is not the case, is, that amongst those invited to join it by having it represented to them such as it really is, none but men of religious minds, or minds that feel their need of religion, become Pro-

testants. The indifferent and the unbelieving do not break with Romanism.

The state of things is then less changed after the lapse of a hundred years than might be at first supposed. When will it change? God only knows. But we have seen Protestants rejoice, in this point of view, at the activity of Romanism in the present day, and even at the degree of success that it seems to obtain. Strong in their remembrances of the sixteenth century, they were convinced that the cause of the Reformation has infinitely more to hope for from a period of zeal, even though it be bitter and superstitious, than from the torpor in which Romanism has been sunk during the first quarter of this century. Its adversaries seemed as though they were contending with a corpse. This reproach cannot now be applied to them; but, on their part, they will strive with greater confidence, because they have little faith in the new life that has reanimated their old enemy. They know that in reality our century has never been less Romanist, or less suited to be so. If religious life is revived, it cannot fail to be, sooner or later, to the advantage of the religion which is most adapted to the real wants and impulses of the day.

Whatever effects upon the cause of Protestantism may result from the present crisis, it will not the less however have the honour of having been first to proclaim principles which are now spread all over the world. Already in the middle of the sixteenth century, it dictated pages which might rank, in the nineteenth, among the wisest and most beautiful treatises on the rights of man and the emancipation of the people. It was Protestantism that in 1689 inspired the "*Soupirs de la France esclave*," by Jurieu—the best book at that period on the abuses of absolute monarchy. It was it, that a hundred years earlier, laid down with equal knowledge and fearlessness, the rights of the States-General, and the sovereignty of

the people, in the *Franco-Gallia* of Hotman. We can understand that works of this kind were little calculated to recommend the Reformation to a Louis XIV. or a Louis XV.; but in the present day, when the principles of 1789 are more or less articles of faith for every individual, and in all countries, it is time to do justice to those who proclaimed them a hundred or even two hundred years in advance.

CHAPTER VIII.

After having accompanied the minister to d'Alembert, let us now accompany the missionary to the archbishop. As we have said, it was to him, notwithstanding the letter of the Duke de Choiseul, that he had decided to go on his arrival.

We have also stated how the archbishop, without being friendly to the Jesuits, had become their protector. Conferences frequently took place at the archbishop's palace, between him and the principal Jesuits of Paris. There met together, Father Leforestier, Provincial of all France, Father Desmarêts, the king's confessor, Father de Sacy, formerly confessor to Madame de Pompadour, Father Launay, Director of the Missions in Canada, Fathers de Montigny, de Neuville, d'Huberlant, some others, and the Duke de la Vauguyon, their principal protector at Court. The measures to be taken were discussed. Notes were drawn up to be sent to Father Centurioni, General of the order, to the Cardinals, to Pope Clement XIII., which did not prevent the provincial Father from having his private correspondence besides, with all these personages, unknown to the archbishop. The other questions of the day were reviewed when time permitted—for every one of them was more or less nearly connected with the subject that occupied them most directly. Politics, science, even literature—everything, for some months past, had its share in the deadly strife between the Jesuits and the age.

That evening, then, whilst the party of the Encyclopædia met at d'Alembert's, the Jesuits met at the archbishop's.

Several were already assembled in M. de Beaumont's private apartment.

The archbishop was at his writing-table. He was reading a paper that Father Leforestier, who was standing beside him, had, as it appeared, just given to him.

"This is incredible," murmured he; "I can hardly believe my own eyes; and is this document authentic?"

"Perfectly authentic," my lord; "I received it from Rome this very day—in cipher, of course. I have deciphered it myself, in order to present it to your Grace. Cardinal Spinelli authorizes me to show it."

"And the Pope?"

"The Pope is supposed not to have seen it."

"He is right," said the archbishop, folding up the paper.

"Excuse me," my lord, resumed the Father; "these dear brethren are not acquainted with this document. Permit me to read it to them whilst we are waiting for our friends."

"Certainly.—Ah! here is M. de Sacy. Come here, M. de Sacy. You think you know a great deal about Madame de Pompadour—you do not know all"—

"Is it again," said the Father, "an affair in which I am concerned?"

"It is the old story—but related in her own way."

"I should be curious"—

"And related—come, guess to whom."

"To another confessor, perhaps."

"No; in a higher quarter."

"To your Grace?"

"Higher still."

"To the King?"

"Higher, I say."

"I do not understand"—

"To the Pope!"

"The Pope! Madame de Pompadour has written to the Pope? to the Pope himself?"

"To the Pope himself. Listen:—

"'From the beginning of the year 1752, determined as I was to retain no feeling but those of gratitude and the purest attachment towards the king, I entreated his Majesty to have the doctors of the Sorbonne consulted, and to write to his confessor that he might consult others likewise, in order to devise means that would sanction my remaining near his person, without being exposed to suspicions of a weakness which I no longer felt. The king had the doctors consulted, and wrote to Father Perusseau, who required a total separation. The king replied that he could not consent to it, that I was essential to the wellbeing of his affairs and to his own happiness, that I was the only person who dared tell him the truth, so useful to monarchs. He persisted. The doctors' replies were such that it would have been impossible to act upon them, even if the Jesuits had given their consent.

"'Things remained, then, apparently, in the same state as before, till 1755. Serious reflections upon the misfortunes that had pursued me, led me to believe that happiness is to be found in God only. I addressed myself to Father de Sacy, the confessor of my youth, as to a man deeply convinced of this truth. He tried me in private till the end of January 1756. By his advice I wrote to my husband; but my husband refused to see me again. By his advice, also, for the sake of propriety, and that there might be a sufficient reason for my residence at Court, I solicited a place in the queen's household. He ordered the staircases, which communicated with my apartments, to be altered, and the king never enters them now but by the drawing-room. He further prescribed a rule of conduct to me, which I strictly observed. This alteration made a great noise at Court and at Paris. Intrigu-

ing persons interfered. Father de Sacy was surrounded by them. He declared that he would refuse me the sacraments so long as I remained at Court. I reminded him of the engagements he had made me take, of those he had himself taken, and of the difference produced in his mode of thinking by these intrigues. He ended by telling me that the king's confessor had been too much laughed at, when, after a pretended rupture with Madame de Montespan, the Count de Toulouse was born. I had nothing to reply to such motives, and discontinued seeing him. The abominable 5th of January took place,* and was followed by the same intrigues. My departure from Court was wished for at any price. The king did all he could to induce Father Desmarêts to allow him to receive the sacraments. The answer was the same; and the king, who earnestly desired to fulfil his duties as a Christian, was deprived of this privilege.

"'Notwithstanding the extreme patience that I had exercised towards Father de Sacy for eighteen months, I was not the less deeply afflicted at my painful situation. I spoke of it to a worthy man in whom I had confidence, and he mentioned it to a friend of his, an abbé, both learned and intelligent. They both thought that my conduct did not deserve the suffering I was made to endure. My new confessor'"—

"She has a confessor!" exclaimed Father de Sacy. "Does she give his name?"

"No," said the archbishop; "and I cannot imagine who it is. I resume.

"'My new confessor has put a stop to this injustice. He has allowed me to take the sacraments; and although I feel some distress on account of the secresy to be observed in order to save him from calumny, still it is a great consolation to my mind.

* The attempt of Damiens.

"'But the king could not, like myself, communicate privately. His Majesty therefore wishes to have the opposition removed which his desire of receiving the sacraments encounters. The king is distressed at the difficulties that his confessor has pointed out to him on this head; he is persuaded that the Pope, when acquainted with the facts of the case, will remove by his advice and authority the obstacles that prevent him from fulfilling a duty sacred to himself, and edifying to his people.'"*

"This confessor puzzles me not a little," repeated Father de Sacy.

"Do you remark, Fathers," said the archbishop, "the composition of this singular document? For nearly ten years past, all the efforts of the Marchioness tend to this—the obtaining permission for the king to communicate. She feels that this outward reconciliation with the Church would tranquillize the king's conscience indefinitely, and that from that time there would be no reason for her quitting the Court. It is she alone, by her own account, that ardently desires to fulfil her religious duties; it is she who, after several years of patience and hope, has at last obtained permission to perform them. Gradually she grows bolder. Would the Pope be more severe towards his most Christian Majesty than a humble confessor has been towards a poor erring woman? How much art beneath this apparent simplicity!"

"And yet this is the woman who holds our fate in her hands," said the provincial Father.

"Certain rumours were abroad to-day," said another.

"True, perhaps, and which will be false to-morrow. These shocks strengthen her position. She is never more confident than when she has been on the point of falling."

* This letter was found amongst the papers of the Duke de Choiseul.

"Her stock of animosity is renewed when she is in danger."

"Her stock, as far as we are concerned, is always, I think, complete."

"That is not perhaps so true," said the archbishop, "as is generally thought. People who know her intimately have assured me that she has no feeling of hatred towards you; which is no reason, we well know, that she should not be ready to sacrifice you, if she saw it to be to her advantage. She considers, as these persons affirm, that Fathers Perusseau, Desmarêts, de Sacy, all those, in short, who have shown themselves severe, have but done their duty. She declares that she has no ill-will towards them. Is this true? It is reasonable to believe that her grounds of complaint against them influence her feelings towards your order, even without her being aware of it; but if she sacrifices you, or allows you to be sacrificed, it will be, I think, from very different motives. In the first place, you may be convinced that she has no power in all this but in so far as she yields to the impulsion of the organized movement against you. She can, by encouraging it, do you great harm; she could not save you by resisting it. The philosophers flatter her because she serves their cause; let her cease to do so, and they will cast her off like a useless tool. She is aware of it; she has had proofs of it. Her leading motive then is fear; the next is self-love. Nothing is too great for her courage, according to her friends: nothing, according to her enemies, has as yet justified the reputation she has acquired. She would wish to prove to the latter that they are wrong; to the former, that they are right. There is some glory in bringing down those who are as high as you are."

"This is a melancholy consolation, my lord," said one of the Fathers. "It is certain that some of her intimates compliment her upon it already. A certain quatrain"—

"Let us hear it."

> "When Agnes rul'd, by fate 't was writ,
> The English France should surely quit;
> And so, at Pompadour's command
> The Jesuits must depart the land."

"There are many others of the same kind. But, Fathers"—

"This confessor, this confessor," still repeated Father de Sacy. He was evidently less shocked at the scandalous aspect of the affair, than at having known nothing about it, and being unable to sift it thoroughly.

"But—this confessor—stop," said Father de Launay at length. "It occurs to me that the Marchioness has sometimes gone to—I do not know what village, in the diocese of Meaux, on the road to Paris. Might not this confessor perhaps be the Abbé de Narniers?"

"We have it!" exclaimed all the Fathers.

"And this explains, besides," said the archbishop, "why the Abbé de Narniers is to preach before the king."

"He will not preach, my lord!" interrupted a Father who was introduced at the moment.

"Father Desmarêts!—I thought you were at Versailles."

"I come from thence, and I return there to-night. You know the state of the case?"

"Certain reports have circulated"—

"Well-founded reports, my lord. To-morrow, perhaps to-night, Madame de Pompadour will have left the château. The king sent for me. I had a long conversation with him. I repeated my conditions positively and distinctly to him. I proved to him that by dwelling on the pretended innocency of his present intercourse with his former mistress, he is trifling with me, with himself, with every one, but above all with God."

"Good," said the archbishop; "very good!"

"And at last he yielded. To-morrow, if he keeps his

word, I receive his confession. In a few days, if he continues to observe our agreement, I allow him to communicate."

"Good, good!" repeated the archbishop.

The worthy Fathers did not appear so fully satisfied—at least some uneasiness was apparent beneath their satisfaction.

"It is playing high," said some one at last. "You may succeed, or you may not. And then, with what we have already on our hands"—

Desmarêts shook his head—"Fathers, Fathers," said he, "the time for human calculation is gone by. If I fail, we shall not be worse off; if I triumph, our position will not be better. The Marchioness and the Duke may hasten our ruin; but neither she, nor the Duke, nor the king, nor any one else, could prevent it any longer. The king was our friend; he is so still. What has he done for us? what can he do? Do you think you are still in the days when the king was master? No, no. We have but to say now with Father de la Tour, to whom the attorney-general,* his former pupil, wished to give some advice—

'Venit summa dies et ineluctabile tempus.'"

"Neither resist nor yield," pursued Father Desmarêts; "this should be our motto at the present moment. If we yield, we disgrace ourselves; let us be what we are, or nothing. If we resist, our destruction will not be averted, and it will be final. Let men act; let men speak. If we fall, let us fall as martyrs. The best means of rising to life again one day, is to keep aloof from all the struggles that either retard or hasten our ruin."

This was indeed the system that the order had recently adopted, particularly in France. The provincial Father had forbidden all publications. In the midst of so many attacks, absolute silence was to be maintained. Did this proceed

* Séguier.

from ability, or greatness of mind, calculation, or piety? These two principles, so generally mingled in all human actions, have never more frequently been found united than in those of the Jesuits. There, as we believe, is the secret of their history—this is the explanation of all the love and hatred of which they have been the objects. If you love them, you may fill volumes with their great and noble deeds; if you hate them, you may fill quite as many with pictures of their ambition, intrigues, relaxed or absurd doctrines. When their sacrifices and devotedness are related to you—admire them, and you will be just; but investigate, criticize, and you will still be just.

Let us add, in order to be just, that whether we praise or blame, we here speak and shall continue to speak—unless we premise the contrary—of the Jesuits of that time, not of the present. The latter, in our opinion, neither deserve the same kind of criticism—nor, above all, the same praise. We seek in vain amongst them for those distinguished men, or those examples of self-sacrifice that pleaded in favour of their order a hundred years ago. If they themselves try to stop the mouths of their adversaries, it is almost always by appealing to their former glory—to their missionaries, their learned men, their schools, their discoveries in days gone by. They well know that all the good they now do, others do quite as well as themselves, and could do it without them. They perceive that even the good that proceeds from them, does not produce the same effect as it would if it proceeded from another quarter; they feel that the antipathy of which they are the objects—be it just or not—injures their Church more than all their labours can do to benefit her. This is why they always take refuge in the past—when they really were the foremost and the most useful soldiers of the Roman unity—while on the contrary, they see that they are now like troops,

more burdensome than useful—yet that cannot well be disbanded. They feel that neither the Church nor the times want them. While giving themselves out, from old habit, as the teachers of mankind at large, they feel it necessary to ask permission of mankind to hold the office. We shall have to return to this subject.

Their remaining unmoved under these renewed attacks, was therefore more or less the result of this constant mixture of religious feelings and worldly views. They were silent, because it appeared to them great, as Christians, to bow their heads beneath oppression; they were silent also—perhaps we ought to say *above all*—because they no longer hoped to gain anything by speaking: and also because the greatest injury they could do their enemies at this moment, was to leave to them the whole odium of acting the part of persecutors.

But neither of these motives was of a nature to be understood at that period. The times had not sufficient piety to imagine that men could be silent from resignation, nor sufficient impartiality to comprehend that their silence would prove, in the sequel, an argument against their judges. The simple conclusion drawn, therefore—and their history, it is true, sufficiently authorized this distrust—was, that if they were silent in public, they were only the more active in secret. All the machinations that, as it was thought, they could not fail to carry on in the dark, were calculated upon with a sort of terror. Those who went forward to the assault, did not doubt that they trod on ground that was undermined, and this feeling contributed to increase the ardour of some, the fears of others, and the hatred of all. It appears, however, that the word of command was very religiously obeyed. We have no means of knowing what passed under the shadow of the confessional; besides, we think that the Jesuits had a perfect right to recruit friends wherever they

could; but as for intrigues, properly so called, we have none to reproach them with, from the moment that they were aware of really being in peril. Besides, what could they have hoped to gain by them? Everything was seen through. They had enemies everywhere—they were watched everywhere—mere prudence, as well as the motives we have mentioned, bade them remain spectators. Prosperity had lowered them—they desired to be elevated by their very fall.

"You are indeed," resumed the archbishop, "at a very solemn crisis. You are called upon to act a part which is truly great; so great that what I would ask of God for you, Fathers, is not so much the courage to enter upon it—for you will have that courage—but rather strength to do it without pride. Your brethren in Portugal give you a beautiful example in this respect. You certainly will not have to endure in France such treatment as is inflicted upon them. It will, therefore, be easier to show courage—easier to be martyrs. Take care! the pride of martyrdom is like any other pride; and I need not tell you how God detests pride. It is great to be able to bear suffering, but it is nothing more; to bear suffering without pride is more than great—it is Christian. Listen to what one of those men writes, on whom the Marquis of Pombal has exhausted his despotism. It is Father Kaulen, writing to the Provincial of the Lower Rhine:—

"'Carried off by soldiers, who, sword in hand, conveyed me to a fortress, I was thrown into a dungeon where the rats disputed my very food with me. We were twenty in number. At first we were treated with some respect; afterwards, only food enough was given us to prevent our dying of hunger. Our Breviaries were taken from us; one day an attempt was made to deprive us of our crucifixes. One of us could not endure this violence; he died. Soon after, we were transferred to the prisons of Lisbon, and from thence to the fort-

ress of St Julian, on the sea-shore. Our prison in this fort is still more dreadful than the other. It is a dungeon under ground, dark and infected, where daylight only enters by an opening twelve inches high, and three inches wide. We receive a little oil for our lamp, half a pound of bread, and water which is often bad. The damp trickles down the walls. Everything spoils here, said the Governor of the fort one day —nothing keeps but the Jesuits. And in truth, we seem kept by a miracle, in order to suffer for Christ's sake. From time to time, some of our number die. We envy their lot, not because they have reached the end of their labours, but because they have gained the martyr's palm.

"'Those of our Fathers who were at Macao, some of whom had suffered courageously, both torments and imprisonment, amongst the infidels, have been brought here also. It would seem that it is more pleasing to God that they should suffer undeservedly in this country, than die for the faith amongst idolaters. His will be done!

"'We have only to abjure the Society to be set at liberty. We were told this at the beginning; it is repeated to us every day, with threats of increasing our torments. Thank God, none have yielded as yet, nor will, I hope, yield!*

"'Pray for us, dear brethren, but not as for men to be pitied. We feel that God is with us. We would not change places with you.

"'LAURENT KAULEN, prisoner of Jesus Christ.'"

"Pray for him!" exclaimed Father de Launay. "It is rather he who should pray for us. A martyr—a saint"—

"Yes," said Father de Sacy; "he will one day be amongst the patrons of our Society."

* None did yield. Six years afterwards, there were still a hundred confined in the dungeons of St. Julian.

The archbishop slightly shrugged his shoulders. "They are incurable!" murmured he.

The worthy Fathers were not admiring; they were calculating how much lustre and advantage one saint more would bring them.

Whilst the letter was passing from hand to hand, a door opened, and immediately closed again. The step of a man hastily retreating had been heard, as well as a voice that said, "It is a mistake."

"What is it?" said the prelate.

"My lord," said one of the Fathers, "I think I saw—I scarcely know—Father Bridaine."

It was he. Having entered the palace as one who was expected, he had been taken straight to the archbishop's private room.

"Father Bridaine!" exclaimed every one. The surprise, to judge by their manner, was not the most welcome to them.

M. de Beaumont seemed to reflect for an instant, then went to open the door. "Come in," said he; "come in, Father. Mistake or not, you are welcome."

"My lord, this costume"—he pointed to his leather gaiters. His cassock was white with dust.

"This costume!" said the archbishop. "It is your own, Father. The apostle of our villages should be seen such as he is—

> 'Sunt quos curriculo pulverem olympicum
> Collegisse juvat'—

says Horace. Is not your dust of equal value?"

"My lord"—

"But you are perhaps much fatigued?"

"No, my lord; I only come from Meaux, and I have taken the whole day for the journey."

"Sit down;" and the archbishop, as he led him to a seat, whispered: "Did you receive my note?"

"Yes."

"You have seen no one yet?"

"No one; but the Duke has written to me likewise. He desired to see me first."

"Indeed!"

"Fathers," resumed the archbishop aloud, "since chance has brought about a meeting between you and Father Bridaine here, I will not conceal from you that it is partly by my entreaty that he has come to Paris. His knowledge, his experience, his personal influence"—

"His Grace is, I think, mistaken, Fathers, as regards my being of use to you. I should have, it is true, many things to say to you; but these things"—he hesitated.

"Go on," said the archbishop.

"These things, Fathers, would be more easily said if I saw you powerful and prosperous, than in prospect of the dangers that threaten you. Besides, several of you know already what I think, and what I have always thought—Father Leforestier, Father de Sacy, Father"—

As he sought, while he spoke, other faces that were known to him, his eyes rested upon one, the sight of which seemed to affect him painfully.

"Father Charnay," pursued he.

It was indeed the same whose exploits in the Cevennes we have seen. Bridaine named one or two more, repeating that they had had opportunities of knowing all his mind on the subject of their order.

"But since then," said the archbishop, "events have made progress. The Society's cause is in danger in Spain, in France, even in Italy, perhaps at Rome; for in the end the abolition of the order will be demanded, and the Holy See may possibly

not be in a condition to refuse. Never did such a mighty tempest"—

"My lord," said the missionary, "we have here a great trial which may last for centuries in this world, and will never be wound up but at the tribunal of God. It is before God, then, rather than before man, and according to the ordinary rules of human justice, Fathers, that you ought to judge yourselves and your order. You go over the accusations, the calumnies against you that are spread abroad; then you complain of injustice, prejudice, and cruelty. Humanly speaking, you are right, thoroughly right. Amongst the complaints urged against you, there are few which are not more or less imaginary, or that an impartial Catholic could seriously bring forward; still less would he see in them enough to justify the dissolution of a religious order, and the proscription of from fifteen to twenty thousand ecclesiastics.

"But if we have a right, humanly speaking, to call every punishment iniquitous which is disproportioned to the offence, and still more so if based upon false or exaggerated accusations, God, who takes a higher view of things, may see justice where we only see iniquity. When He is represented to us in Scripture as punishing a nation by the arm of a conqueror, that nation is certainly innocent as regards those who are about to destroy it. The agent of punishment is therefore unjust, the punishment itself is not so.

"God forbid, Fathers, that I should apply to your present situation a reflection so severe and decided. All I mean to say is, that the evident injustice of the condemnation that men are preparing to strike you with, whether here or elsewhere, ought not to suffice to prove your innocence in your own eyes. Because the ungodly hate you, you cannot logically conclude that God loves you. It would not, I repeat, be the first time that He has committed the execution of His wise

decrees to the hands of the wicked. I do not judge you; all I allow myself to do, is to point out to you what you should not lose sight of in judging yourselves."

Accustomed to hear only fervent apologies or bitter accusations, the Fathers had listened to this appeal to their most elevated feelings in respectful astonishment. They felt transported to ground upon which they could receive criticism without being irritated, as well as praise without being elated. They were all attention, but Bridaine had concluded.

"Go on," said the archbishop.

"No, my lord, I do not enter into details. I have said that I commit the cause to God, and to the conscience of our Fathers. I am not called upon to judge any further."

"And if we ourselves entreat you to do it?" said Father de Launay.

"Yes, we ourselves," said the others.

"If you entreat me. Well, may God assist me while I state my whole mind to you. Let me premise that there are two things which I must beg of you not to forget, otherwise I should be obliged to repeat them both before and after every one of my observations.

"The first is, that I render the fullest justice to what you have done for the honour and welfare of religion. No one can admire more than myself your missionaries and your learned men. There have been, and there are among you, men whose faith, zeal, and knowledge I should be happy to possess.

"The second is, that no tie, no sympathy unites me to your enemies. I do not share in any of the prejudices that have been raised against you; and as for the minor causes of complaint which I may have thought well founded, I have always separated them in my own mind from the falsehoods and exaggerations that have been mixed up with them.

"This premised, I ask myself whether there may not be

other evils, difficult perhaps to state, but that do exist, that have accumulated with time in the recesses of the most upright consciences, and that may plead against you before God. 'God,' says the Scripture, 'is a jealous God'—'He will have none other gods before Him.' This is His first commandment. And when we preach on this subject, we never fail to say, with great truth, that there are many ways of being idolaters; that money to the miser, glory to the ambitious, pleasure to the one, power to the other, are all in reality 'gods before Him.'

"Now, your Society is your god—not assuredly in the sense of renouncing God for its sake, but if you serve God, it is for it rather than for Him. There were formerly temples dedicated to the people of Rome, *populo romano;* if you were not Christians, if your faith allowed of your building a temple to more than one god, the Society of Jesus would have its own beside those of Jesus Himself, as the people of Mars raised one in their own honour, beside those of Mars himself. One of your Fathers, to whom I had an opportunity of ministering on his deathbed, was so struck by this idea that it imbittered his last moments. And yet it was not without difficulty that I had brought him to admit it. I had found the Society and God so mingled, so identified in his heart, that it was long before he even understood me; but when his conscience was alarmed, he felt so wretched that he despaired of his salvation, and I scarcely knew how to bind up the wound I had inflicted. He could not recall a single action of his life—and yet it had been a long one, and well filled—without acknowledging with alarm that it had been done as much for the Society as for God, often more—for earth more than for heaven. He saw the supreme Judge taking out of the balance all that was not standard weight, and he trembled lest after this separation nothing or almost nothing should be left.

"This sifting, Fathers, which will certainly be done by God, do it now, if not for each one of you separately, at least, since your Society is the object in question, for it and its works. See it referring everything to itself and its interests—whether spiritual or temporal, its power, and glory; see it presenting itself to its members as their mother, their country, their Church, their god, their all; and then say if it may not, by that alone, have deserved the indignation of Him who will 'have none other gods before Him!'

"From this fundamental error have sprung all those errors which may have contributed to alienate from you the love of God, as well as the respect and affection of your fellow-men. Your institution has served the cause of religion, but less as a servant executing the orders of his master, than as a minister reigning in the name of an indolent monarch, and assuming, if not all the honours, at least all the rights of the highest rank. I am not called upon to examine whether you have always made a good use of these rights. I only take the spirit in which you have done so; I say that, in this point of view, if you had never decreed but what was excellent in the name of religion, still there has been real usurpation on your part. You have not reigned in God's name, but in God's stead. And what has been the result?—that laws of divine origin, promulgated by you, have become, in the eyes of many, commandments of men, both arbitrary and humiliating. They have been wrong in giving way to this impression. They ought to have examined; they would have found, I do not say always, but almost always, the law of God at the foundation of yours. But meanwhile, externally, it was with yours, with yours only, that they came into contact; it was to your will, to your yoke, that they seemed to be subject. This idea—turned to account by some, eagerly admitted by those to whom the yoke of religion was burdensome—has powerfully

contributed to shake its influence. If I dare use the expression, God Himself has been involved in your overthrow, like those sovereigns who fall victims to the hatred declared against their ministers. It is you who have, in many respects, excited the universal rebellion against faith, morality, and all that is most sacred.

"I say 'morality,' and on this subject more than one observation might be made. I do not intend to examine into your writings in order to see whether it be right or wrong, to assert that you authorize falsehood, theft, and adultery. I think, on the one hand, that you have had some very unscrupulous doctors, whose maxims, applied to the common course of life, would strangely modify all that has hitherto been called vice or virtue; on the other, I believe that their aberrations cannot justly or reasonably be adduced as your habitual and invariable principles. The question at issue, thus viewed, may be liable to be very differently appreciated. But it might be reduced to one simple observation, on which, I believe, all would be agreed. Whether you may or may not be accused of having corrupted morality, you have lowered its standard; whether you have lost sight of the principles given by Christ as its basis or not, you have buried them beneath the infinite details of your precepts. By dint of analysing virtue, and, above all, vice, you have laid down a multitude of distinctions between good and evil, many of which I know exist in the human heart, but which, presented in theory, can only serve to take from the moral law that decided and clearly obligatory character which it has in the gospel and in our consciences. There, man appears to me as bound down to duty, so to speak, by two or three cords at the utmost, but which are strong, and judiciously tightened; one extremity of which is attached to the firmest, the other to the most feeling part of his nature. You have not cut these cords,

but you have untwisted them, in order to take one by one all the threads of which they are composed; and by these threads, indefinitely multiplied, you have pretended to draw men to virtue and to God. Two opposite results have thence proceeded, both equally lamentable. If man submits, he is cramped in all his movements, he goes to heaven as a mummy swathed in bandages. If he resists, the threads break, and he is no longer bound by any tie whatever to religion or morality. Consequently, this is another point of view in which the universal casting off of all restraint at the present moment is in part your work. You have substituted petty precepts for great principles; heaps of sand for the breakwater of solid rock. The floods have risen, and the sand has been swept away.

"If, then, as everything seems to predict, and as you yourselves appear to believe—if, I say, you are the first to perish in this tempest, what can I advise you, dear brethren, but to accept the trial in a Christian spirit, and to make every effort to reap good fruits from it? God knows as well as ourselves, and better than we do, that the flood will continue to rise higher and higher; He knows that by allowing you to fall, He opens a fresh door for those who would invade His temple. On the part of a man, of a monarch, it would be madness to remove all the forces from a citadel, in order to punish some of the soldiers who guard it; but there are appointed times when God does not stop at details. While we count by days, He counts by centuries. If He destroys or allows destruction to be done, He has all eternity for building up again. What matters it to Him that His temple should be defended by such or such a one?

"Let us cease, pigmies that we are, let us cease to imagine that we are necessary to Him. He has only to will, and troops are ready at His bidding. Christ says that of the very

stones He can raise up children to Abraham. And what if the sanctuary be invaded for a moment—once more, what matters it to Him? He knows that He has but to breathe upon the wicked, and they shall be dispersed. It is His will to punish the times in which we live—and He has begun by you."

When Bridaine had ceased speaking, there was a long silence. Some of his hearers appeared to have relished this language but little; others seemed trying to comprehend it. No one, however, had interrupted him. Their consciences in reality agreed with him. If he had been mistaken on some points, there remained three leading accusations which they could not think of refuting: That they had by a sort of worship deified their Society; that they had, in the sight of their fellow-men, put themselves in the place and in the stead of God; and that by drawing out into detail the laws of morality, they had taken from it all greatness and strength.

Every pious, sincere, and enlightened Romanist, if he reflects, cannot fail to reproach the Jesuits with this. Bridaine had summed up the opinions of this class, which, though not numerous, is highly respectable; which has always felt the same antipathy to them from Christian motives, that others have felt from impiety. The position of such Romanists is necessarily extremely delicate. When they see so many evil passions at work against the Jesuits, their conscience bids them take their defence; and no sooner have they opened their mouths to do so, than they are accused of being sold to them. The Jesuits on their side are not scrupulous in laying hold of any one who has taken their defence, or appeared to do so. Say but a word in their favour, and your name will be inscribed in capital letters in the long catalogue of their apologists; but only retract that word, or explain that you did not mean to absolve them from all blame, and you are

immediately cast off with disdain, and confounded by them with the most virulent of their adversaries.

Bridaine had often experienced this. When he reminded his hearers that several of the Fathers, then assembled at the archbishop's, already knew his opinion of their order, he might have added that his candour had often cost him much annoyance; and when he had consented at their request to tell them once more what he thought of their situation, he well knew to what he was exposing himself. The natural consequence of the first of the three errors pointed out above, is, that to interfere with the worship paid by a Jesuit to his order, is to wound him in his dearest affections; it is to him what censures levelled against God Himself would be to an ordinary believer.

And yet, if prudence and charity had not forbidden his speaking out; if, above all, as a priest and a Romanist, he had not been obliged to repress on more than one point the impulse of an indignant conscience—what might he not have added? He might have shown that the worship paid to their order had become the sole religion of many amongst them. He might have described the influence exerted by them in the name of God, as assuming, wherever it was possible, the form of the most daring, the most entire, and the harshest despotism. In a word, he might have exhibited those moralists whom he had only reproached with having weakened the laws of morality by dint of analysing them, with seeking out vice in its lowest depths, and publishing, always *ad majorem Dei gloriam*,* books which may scarcely be named.

And what he might have said in 1760, he might repeat in the present day, on several points, with still more justice, and that not of the Jesuits only, but of the great majority of the Romish clergy.

* Their general motto. They put "A.M.D.G." on the title-page of all their books.

The Jesuits fell—the Jesuits have returned. Such as they were, such they are; but without, as we have said, the brilliant talent, the solid learning, the polish of refinement which glossed over their errors and their audacity. Never did they seek more openly to absorb all that are for them, or to crush all that are against them. Formerly they ruled by kings; now, by the people. Formerly they commanded in the name of despotism; now, in the name of liberty. Then, all hostile clamours were stifled by the gag; now, by crying out the loudest themselves. So long as they could raise the stake and the scaffold, they did it; now, when it is no longer possible, they take the side of toleration, sure to begin again when they can. But that which has not changed—that which through every revolution has pursued its shameful and fatal course—is the old inclination to dive into the vilest recesses of the human heart. We have here men, who constitute celibacy an absolute and indispensable condition of sacerdotal purity, and yet, who pass their lives in meditating on all that celibacy was originally intended, one would think, to banish from their imagination and their heart. All the vileness that the coarsely impure gather up as they pass, in the vast field of vice, they analyse, they classify—they give names to that which was nameless, even in the orgies of imperial Rome; and this disgusting science goes on perfecting itself from day to day. Of those, even whom you know to be the most pure, the most holy in their own conduct, the most in earnest in opposing evil, you may be sure that a profligate would have nothing to teach them—and that he has not fed on impure subjects, and ideas more than they themselves.

But why this indignation? Listen to their own language: "The physician of the body is not infected by the ulcers that he sees; why then should the physician of souls—the con-

fessor—be contaminated by the vices that he analyses? It is, after all, for the salvation of his brethren that he devotes himself to these disgusting studies!" And this is the way by which they come to make to themselves consciences which have nothing, or scarcely anything, in common with what honest people have called by that name for six thousand years past. The heart that has fed on these impurities gradually loses the simplicity of innocence, even though it may remain pure. After having explored unscrupulously this portion of the realm of evil, there is less scruple in running the risk of entering upon its other regions. Those who have trifled with impurity, will do the same with falsehood and fraud. Not only are those nice distinctions which soften the passage from good to evil, multiplied in theory; but the rules of the commonest probity will be violated in practice, almost without its being thought wrong. That the end justifies the means, will be professed, now openly and in books, now more secretly and in the confessional, now intentionally, now unintentionally, now without wishing or even suspecting it; but always, everywhere, and in everything. Men and things will be calumniated; quotations mutilated; history falsified; what the most zealous defenders of Romanism have hitherto avowed, will be denied with effrontery; the most formal and overpowering convictions of falsehood will be smiled at, provided they do not reach the persons deceived. For the educated there will be a cool sort of Romanism, reasoning and rational—a vague philosophy, two-thirds of which even infidels themselves would subscribe to; and, at the same time, for simple minds, a religion or rather a worship—for it is only a matter of forms—a worship, we say, thoroughly material—an undigested combination of words and of ceremonies. For the former, fine sermons on morality; for the latter, legends and miraculous medals. Thus they lie to the one, by

giving them as Romanism, that which neither Popes nor Councils have ever acknowledged as such; to the others, by imposing upon them under the name of Christianity, all the coarsest additions that a thousand years of decline have made to primitive Christianity. But to return.

The situation was becoming embarrassing. M. de Beaumont brought it to a close by rising. Archbishop as he was, or rather because he was archbishop, he required to act with caution. When he gave advice to the Jesuits, which sometimes happened, it was in general terms; and although he approved of all he had just heard, he did not wish to be forced to give it his approbation decidedly. They conversed, therefore, for a few minutes standing, but on indifferent subjects. At last the archbishop and Bridaine were left alone.

"Did I say too much?" asked Bridaine.

"Too much? not at all. But too much or too little, what does it matter? It will be just the same to them. As the ancients said, 'Jupiter blinds those whom he intends to destroy.'"

"At least they cannot say that I have any interest in blaming them."

"Do you think so?" M. de Beaumont smiled. Bridaine looked at him with astonishment.

"My lord, I do not understand"—

"Do you think so?" resumed the archbishop. "In a few days, perhaps to-morrow, they will think they have a proof of your being their mortal enemy."

"The proof! What proof?"

"Do you know why the Duke de Choiseul was so urgent to see you?"

"No, indeed."

"He is going to propose to you—to be—but what is the matter? are you ill?"

Hardly had Bridaine sat down on the arm-chair that the archbishop offered him, when he rose up suddenly, breathless and violently agitated; then paused, motionless, his eyes fixed, and his arms half upraised to heaven. Then, as if entirely forgetting where and with whom he was, he began to walk rapidly up and down the room, his eyes still fixed, and his lips trembling. He had guessed—

"Confessor to the king!" murmured he;—"I!—confessor to the king! I!—my God!"

The truth was, that at that period, there was no head strong enough, or heart pure enough—were it Bridaine, or were it a very saint, to resist the attractions attached to this title. To see the King of France at one's feet! To address as "My son" the eldest son of the Church! To interfere with his most secret thoughts! Was it not the highest ecclesiastical office in the kingdom, if not the most brilliant, from the real power attached to it?

Louis XV. indeed had transformed it into a very pitiable sinecure, since his passions had thrown off all restraint. The intercourse of Father Desmarêts, with his very august and very hardened penitent, had been reduced for some years past to some insignificant conversations and negotiations, always broken off because the king persisted in promising nothing essential. It might, however, happen any day that the king's confessor should be once more called upon to exercise, in all its plenitude, this power suspended for the moment. Such as it was, the Jesuits attached immense value to it. Louis XV., at the height of his profligacy, had retained the religious instincts of his youth. He was known to be seriously distressed at being at variance with the Church. This regret, though hitherto powerless against his vices, might suddenly throw him into the arms of religion, that is, into the arms of his confessor; for religion to him—the most ardent of his

wishes as regarded religion—consisted in a reconciliation with the Church by participation in the sacraments. The longer the struggle had lasted, the greater reason there was to believe that, once vanquished, he would surrender himself, soul and body, to his conqueror.

Bridaine had never made this calculation; and had he made it, it would not have been for his own interest, for there was not a priest in France who would have dreamed less than he of becoming the king's confessor. But the overture was not the less startling, above all, under such circumstances. The Jesuits had almost always held possession of the post that was going to be offered to him. In this change of persons, there would be a complete revolution; the new confessor would have a part to act in the struggle that had commenced between the Parliaments and the order, and that part a most important one. On this account Bridaine experienced a confused mixture of feelings, in which there was both joy and sorrow, fear and confidence.

"Yes," resumed the archbishop, when he saw him a little more composed; "the Duke de Choiseul intends to have you appointed to Father Desmarêts' place. Hitherto there have been only four or five persons in the secret, and Desmarêts is not of the number. M. de Choiseul does not know that I am one of them."

"But what is his object?"

"Simply this. He wanted a man known to be opposed to the Jesuits, but not their enemy; for the king would never have accepted a confessor who had manifested bitterness against them. He required, moreover, a priest tried by long labours in the ministry, universally esteemed; in short, worthy, in the sight of all parties, of the eminent position he was called to occupy. He believes that he has found such a priest."

"My lord"—

"And he is not mistaken."

"But," said Bridaine, "would not the single fact of my presence at Court constitute me the auxiliary of those who have called me hither out of hatred to the Jesuits, and hatred to religion, which to many is one and the same thing?"

"That such is their intention, I do not doubt; it is even probable enough that one of the reasons why they have thought of you is, that you are not used to Court, and that they hope to have in you an instrument all the more pliable, because you will not suspect that you are one. Should you refuse on that account? I think not. It will be for you to baffle all the evil designs with which it is perhaps already arranged that you are to be associated. Be yourself; be free! You can but gain by it. When the king sees you to be the adversary of those who intrigue, of the very persons who have recommended you to his choice, it is impossible but that he should have full confidence in you."

"Confidence, perhaps; but his vices! You may be convinced that I will not remain spectator of them. Either the Marchioness must go, or I myself shall leave."

"The Marchioness?—What! you don't know?—She is in disgrace."

"Since when?"

"A very short time back; but it was Desmarêts who brought us the news. Courage, Father! You see everything is becoming smooth—courage! perhaps you are called upon to save France."

Bridaine shook his head. "To save France, my lord! the days of miracles are past. If I save the king, it will be doing much. Shall I save him?—God only knows. Besides, I am not there yet. The Duke will not call me to the office without laying down conditions. He will take his precautions. Will they be such as I can accept?"

"Here are the conditions, perhaps," said the archbishop, giving him a note directed to him—a servant had just brought it in.

"The Duke!" exclaimed he. "Let us see: 'Father Bridaine will be good enough to get into the carriage which I have the honour of sending for him, and which will convey him to my hotel. I am waiting for him.—Choiseul.'"

"He knew, then, that I was here," resumed he.

"Spies are not wanting at Paris. You have been followed. In fact, it is just as well. As you have an agreement to make with him, the terms are laid down beforehand."

"How?"

"He had written to you to see no one before him; you have disobeyed by coming to me. It was the best way of showing him that you do not mean to be under his orders. Consequently, the note is somewhat cold."

"Yes; one might take it for a *lettre de cachet.* You are almost in disgrace, dear Father, before entering into favour. But do not be uneasy; he wants your services. Meanwhile, you are forewarned; that is all I wished. We shall say more about it another time; unless, indeed, you mean to carry out rebellion further, and not go till to-morrow."

"I am almost inclined."

"No—all things considered—no bravado. For such a man as he is, it is doing much, you may be sure, to have sent for you. So"—

"Your blessing, my lord, on my arrival!"

"I give it you; and perhaps your arrival may be a blessing for us."

"Let us pray, my lord; but let us hope for nothing."

CHAPTER IX.

Only those who lived at the Court of Louis XIV. or Louis XV. could have any idea to what degree the importance of affairs increased or diminished in proportion to the interests engaged, the persons who took a part in them, or the turn that the most insignificant details took, or seemed to take. Of all the characteristics of an absolute government, none is more humiliating to the subject, than to know that his highest interests are thus attached to mere trifles; and it were well for him if at least attention is equally divided, and these trifles alone have not the privilege of absorbing it in high places.

This fact is never more apparent than at periods of decline. In the universal lowering of men's minds, public questions increase in importance, as it were, by being brought down to a low standard. They must be mixed up with petty interests; they must have passed from principles to details, from things to persons, in order that Government should begin to take notice of them. Thus, the question of the Jesuits had never absorbed the Court so much as since the fall of Desmarêts had been spoken of. The cause at issue had come down to the proportions of an intrigue; those who led Louis XV. were once more in their element. Unable to embrace this question as a whole, they were delighted to have one of its inferior aspects presented to them. It was no

longer an open warfare with the Jesuits—it was a trick to be played upon them; and there always have been people to be found, prouder of playing a good trick than of gaining a battle.

The Duke de Choiseul, notwithstanding his superiority over many others, was no genius. Extensive views, plans conceived or executed on a large scale, did not suit him; all that can be said is, that he allowed it to be seen less than the common run of statesmen of his time. Hence, he had a certain show of greatness of mind, which his flatterers, and above all, he himself, mistook for real greatness, but which history has shown in the true light. Few ministers, in reality, have had less foresight; few have been more wanting in principle, or have allowed themselves to be led more than he, not only by events, but by the smallest fluctuations of opinion. He seemed in advance of the times; he was only impelled forward by them.

As to this question in particular, when he left the Jesuits exposed to the assaults of the Parliaments; when he encouraged under-hand the efforts of their enemies, what was his intention? what could he intend? The more we have studied the history of this crisis, the less we have understood his object. He was not religious enough to desire their fall from attachment to religion, nor *philosopher* enough to desire it for the benefit of impiety, nor liberal enough, above all, to co-operate in it with a view to the enfranchisement of the people and the progress of liberal ideas. Everything, on the contrary, seems to prove that he had not even a just idea of the consequences that might result from this event, in these three respects, the only really important ones. His foremost desire, his one thought was, like the Marchioness, to disarm opposition, and remain in office. The full bearings of the question were beyond his reach; he too required to take up

some detail that would exonerate him from laying hold of principles.

It was he, then, who, through means of his confidants, had set on foot the idea of a new confessor. If the undertaking should fail, subordinates would have to bear all the responsibility; if it succeeded, he would take all the credit to himself. If the new confessor was favourable to Madame de Pompadour, she would be grateful, and the minister would be sure of her support; if the new confessor had her sent away, the minister would reign alone. In either case, he would have avoided taking a decided part against the Jesuits. If they should conquer, they could not boast of having conquered him; if they should be vanquished, it would be the king himself, their friend, who would have abandoned them, and then there would be no longer any reason for sparing them.

It was, however, as yet only by deceiving the king, as to the object of this proceeding, that they could hope to get his consent. To avow to him, or even let him suspect the consequences they hoped to draw from it against the Jesuits, would have been to work in their interest. It was necessary to find out means of representing the thing to him as a change of men, not of systems; and to effect this, the Duke de Choiseul, aided by the Marchioness, had been labouring for some time past.

He had, therefore, been extremely annoyed at the late conferences between the king and Father Desmarêts. Either they would agree, and then how propose another confessor? or they would not agree, and then the king, before changing, would wish to be sure of agreeing better with the other. Could any respectable confessor be found who would promise to be more accommodating than Desmarêts?

As the latter was visibly gaining ground, the minister had

managed so as not to be at Versailles at the moment that the disgrace of the Marchioness should be made public. He neither wished to be suspected of having had any hand in it, which, in fact, was not the case, nor to have consolation or assistance to offer which might bind him down. He had hitherto been so closely united with her as to risk sharing her fall, if not on his guard.

He had, therefore, been at Paris for two days past; but from hour to hour he had intelligence of what was passing at Versailles, and had been the first informed in the course of the day of what had towards evening become the general report, that is, that the Marchioness was to be dismissed. Thus, the very day that he had made an appointment with Father Bridaine, this great change took place in the affair with which he purposed connecting him. His first thought had been to tell him that for the present there was nothing to be done; but on mature reflection, the situation of things had appeared better than at first sight. If the exile of the favourite strengthened Desmarêts in his office, on the one hand, this very event, on the other, removed one of the greatest obstacles that the minister had hitherto perceived. It would not now be necessary to seek a less rigid confessor. The king would not be afraid of appearing to have changed for the sake of having a more lenient one; if needful, and provided he appeared decided on giving up his irregularities, he might be induced to quit the Jesuits as too indulgent, and another confessor might be recommended to him on the very account of his austerity. Thus, after having for an instant almost given up the idea of making this overture to Bridaine, Choiseul had resolved once more to do it immediately. Besides, he knew that the matter had transpired, and he did not doubt but that the archbishop had been one of the first to be informed of it.

This evening there was company at his hotel. It was Wednesday, the usual day of the Duchess de Choiseul's evening parties. He had been glad of this pretext for not being at Versailles, whence he rarely absented himself two days following.

The drawing-rooms of Madame de Choiseul were thrown open to all the good society of Paris; but good society at that period had long been quite a different thing from what was originally designated by that term. The aristocracy of wealth walked proudly side by side with the aristocracy of birth. The distance that social position still left between them was filled up by corruption of morals; vice as well as virtue can establish equality. Beside these two aristocracies, the literary democracy was growing up, to which both, partly from taste and greatly from necessity, were beginning openly to pay their court. Authors, with some few exceptions, were still very deferential to ancient escutcheons and heavy purses; but this deference was beginning to give itself airs of patronage. Men felt that a time was coming when a well-pointed pen would have the upper hand of the heaviest sword, even had it passed down in regular succession from one of Charlemagne's Knights to a Duke and Peer of the Œil-de-Bœuf.

Good society was therefore now an incongruous mixture of nobles beginning to distrust their nobility, of monied men no longer the superiors of any one, and lastly, of authors accustoming themselves to hold the sceptre, and rushing on headlong to that future which the weakness of some, the insignificance of others, and the depravity of all, was opening out to them. Divided into manifold parties, as is invariably the case, the latter did not even need to set aside their intestine animosities, in order to form, on the slightest attack, a compact phalanx, that defied the blunted weapons of a society in decay.

The field of action of this phalanx was the drawing-room, and in that of Madame de Choiseul it showed itself more at ease than in almost any other. The Diogenes of the day were nowhere so fearless of bringing their tubs into contact with the strong box of finance, the sword of knights, the laces of ladies, or the crosier of prelates.

This levelling system was not indeed the mere result of the manners of the day and the liberal tendencies of the mistress of the house—it was part of the politics of the minister. Besides the popularity that he gained by this means with men of letters and finance, it enabled him to bring down the nobles without throwing disrespect upon them, which he would have been reluctant to do; and without crushing them, as Richelieu had done, which would have been out of season. He saw, and justly saw, in the abasement of the nobility, one of the necessities of the times, as well as one of the future conditions on which any government might be practicable, that would not run the risk of losing all, by staking all.

It is little probable that he embraced all the consequences of such a revolution; we should perhaps be nearer the truth in saying, that he saw in it only a means of confirming and strengthening his own power. But, after all, it was one way of comprehending the times in which he lived; and when we recollect how many did not comprehend them, who died without having comprehended them, or only opened their eyes beneath the axe of the executioner, we are disposed to applaud him for having even gone so far.

The assembly that evening was neither numerous nor animated; a thoroughly summer party, at the season when many are at their country-seats, and the rest prefer even a public garden to a drawing-room. Besides, whilst the Duke had come to Paris, many had gone to Versailles; they wished to be nearer the news, and to be present, if possible, at some of

the scenes of the play or of the comedy that they knew was being acted between the king, his mistress, and his confessor. Literary men, little in the habit of passing the summer on their properties, for very sufficient reasons, were more numerous, excepting those whom we have seen at d'Alembert's. Their absence had been remarked. The Duke had asked himself, not without some uneasiness, whether these gentlemen intended already, in their way, to make him a sharer in the disgrace of Madame de Pompadour.

No one ventured to inquire of him how matters stood; his intimacy with her, and close association with her fortunes, were too well known to admit of it. Although everybody knew about as much as himself, he was supposed to be better informed than people in general, and his evident anxiety confirmed this opinion. The Duchess, on her part, made vain efforts to set on foot something like general conversation. There was no animation but in the corners of the room, where people talked together, watching closely all the while every movement of the minister. The guests as they arrived had scarcely time to pay their respects to the Duchess before being carried off into these corners to be overpowered with questions; and the one, of all others in the room, who was most anxious to question them, but could the least venture to do it, was the minister himself.

It was nearly ten o'clock when a name was announced that attracted all eyes towards the door.

The new-comer was an abbé of the middle size, deformed, almost hunchbacked, very ugly, but at the same time with a countenance so intelligent and animated, that his grotesque appearance was quite lost sight of in the brilliancy of his eyes.

"Ah! good evening, M. de Chauvelin!" said the minister, holding out his hand to him. "Who could have guessed that you were at Paris?"

"Why, you, I should imagine."

The Duke squeezed his hand significantly, and he appeared to have understood him.

"True," resumed he, "your Grace could not have known it yet. In fact, I arrived only two hours ago."

"Arrived? where from?" asked the Duchess.

She very well knew, however. The Abbé de Chauvelin, clerk of council to the Parliament of Paris, had been sent to Mont St. Michel, as we have already seen, on the dispersion of that body. He had returned more liberal and more Jansenist than ever, and had just spent six additional months there. But he was one of Madame de Choiseul's intimate friends, and she enjoyed, as she said, putting him into a passion; the witty hunchback generally paid her back with interest.

He therefore looked at her, on this singular question, with a face half laughing, half piteous, shrugged up his shoulders, always quite high enough, drew a deep sigh, and walked on.

"Poor man!" resumed she, "has he left his tongue behind him?"

He turned round—"Left it? no, sharpened it."

"Is that why it remains in the scabbard?"

"Till it is drawn out."

"Is it to be drawn out?"

"When I find an aggressor worth the trouble, Madam."

He bowed with a sly expression, and continued to move on.

Every one pressed forward to shake hands with him. Six months' captivity had amazingly raised him, as might have been foreseen, in the eyes of those whom his imprisonment had been intended to intimidate. The men envied him; the women thought him less ugly. Such a reception openly given, under the eye of a minister, to a man who had just been punished as a rebel, and who was known to be ready to rebel a

second time, was a strange sight. It was indeed known that the minister had had nothing to do with his imprisonment; it had been just seen that he was well received by the Duke himself. But all this, and the last-mentioned circumstance above all, only tends to corroborate what we have said on the general want of self-respect, as well as of respect for principles or for constituted authorities. Those whose position rendered it necessary that they should support the Crown, publicly coalesced with men who made it their business to thwart it. The official advocates of religion and order piqued themselves upon being on good terms with those who preached disorder and impiety. Men lived much as lawyers do, who thunder against each other in court, and walk off arm-in-arm; or as actors, who have almost destroyed each other on the stage, but behind the scenes quietly resume the conversation that had been broken off. Even their violence against the Jesuits was owing in great measure to this excessive levity. "The thing most detested in times of anarchy and disorder," says a historian,* "is order. The Jesuits were too well organized for a state of society tending to universal confusion." All those who had no principles of their own, and who were well aware of it, were annoyed at meeting with others who had; what scandalized them the most in the principles of the Jesuits was not that they were bad—they were not men to trouble themselves much on that score—it was the existence of these principles. There is at all times some Aristides that men are weary of hearing called 'the just,' some individual or some institution whom they cannot forgive for remaining immoveable when everything else is changing. Whether this constancy be in reality the effect of virtue or vice, it matters little; in the sight of those who would overthrow everything, it is quite the same. A landmark may be in the wrong place;

* Capefigue.

there will always be found people ready to throw it down, not because it is in the wrong place, but because they are annoyed at seeing it always there.

In other quarters, this persevering animosity was a means used by certain persons for making the public believe, and for persuading themselves that they too were firm in their opinions, and were capable of attaching themselves to an undertaking, and devoting to it their lives, their strength, and their time. There are Romanists whose Romanism may be reduced to their detestation of Protestants; there are Protestants whose religion consists in not being Romanists. Thus, there were many who thought themselves sufficiently moral, because they attacked the morality of Escobar; sufficiently religious, because they would have nothing to do with the religion of the Jesuits; sufficiently men of principle, because they showed as much perseverance in overthrowing a powerful Society, as it had shown in effecting its own rise. And what we observe in this place of the party struggles in 1760, we might repeat almost word for word in the present day.

The Abbé de Chauvelin, who reserved for them the first lashes of a tongue sharpened at Mont St. Michel, did not precisely belong to the last-mentioned class. With him, external levity was rather a concession to the manners of the day, than the result of inclination or an absence of principle. His conduct was irreproachable; it does not even appear that his enemies were justified in accounting for the purity of his morals solely by the deformity of his person. As Canon of Notre-Dame, he was on the worst possible terms with the archbishop, not as a philosopher or a libertine, but as a Jansenist and a member of Parliament. Left to himself, he would perhaps have been satisfied with not liking the Jesuits; he would have shrunk from the idea of disturbing, in order to strike them, things which he still respected. But as clever

men are often at the service of fools, and good intentions in the wake of evil, he had suffered himself to become the leader of the crusade. Jansenists, philosophers, members of Parliament, all united to urge him on. His popularity reached as low as the classes who had, since the time of the Fronde, been indifferent to all that passed in the ranks above them. The market-women had sung dirges on his banishment, and carols on his return. His second exile had nearly caused a riot; his second return was going to be a second triumph. He was about to be hailed as the future deliverer of his country.

When he made the tour of the apartments, the Duke, who had not lost sight of him, again accosted him. They conversed for a moment with those near them; then, as they moved on: "I shall make my escape," said Choiseul in a whisper. "Come and join me, and bring La Chalotais with you."

"Is he here?"

"Yes, look for him."

Chauvelin resumed his progress. He discovered the person whom the Duke had just named in the recess of a window.

"Well," said he, "colleague, it seems I must come and look for you."

"I took part in your triumph from a distance."

"And my laurels, no doubt, will disturb your rest."

"Probably."

Though he said this laughing, it was the truth. René de la Chalotais, attorney-general of the Parliament of Brittany, played the same part there as Chauvelin at Paris. Active and ardent, he longed to throw himself into the *mêlée*. He envied the lot of the magistrates of Paris, who came into collision with ministers, princes, and the king himself; he consoled himself as he best could, meanwhile, at the expense of the Duke d'Aiguillon, governor of Brittany. No one sur-

passed him in the art of cutting up a man with one of those witticisms that are not forgotten, even when they are none of the best. "If he was not covered with glory, he was at all events covered with flour," he had said of this same Duke d'Aiguillon, because he had been so unlucky as to retire into a mill for a few minutes during a battle.* This battle had saved Brittany, and yet the ill-natured jest had stuck to the governor who fought it.

"Which of us shall begin?" resumed Chauvelin. "How are you going on at Rennes?"

"We are only waiting for the signal."

"You will not have long to wait, I think."

"What does Choiseul say?"

"He is waiting for us both in his study. Let us walk about a little, and then leave the room unobserved."

But as they passed near the Duchess—"Come, M. de St. Michel, come—you have been quite a boor. We shall forgive you."

He drew near.

"But after having punished you," continued she, "see how much more gallant your brother is than you.—Read these verses. I intend it to be your punishment."

It was a singular enough composition, which had been the rage for two days past; for light verses had not lost the privilege of dividing the interest and attention of the fashionable world with events of the greatest moment. The Marquis de Chauvelin, brother of the abbé, happening to be at table at Isle-Adam, the Prince de Conti's, with seven young and handsome women, his wife included, some one compared them in jest to the seven mortal sins. The idea took. They cast lots who should be Pride, Envy, Avarice, &c.; and the Marquis de Chauvelin soon made a couplet for each of them:

* On the landing of a body of English troops on the coast of Brittany, 1758.

To Madame de Maulevrier.—*Pride.*

"Lady! to you it is that Pride
A pleasing transformation owes;
Men call'd it vice, but at your side
It now to justice grows."

To Madame d'Agenois.—*Envy.*

"Thémire! with far too lenient eye
Perchance your sin I view;
But what I feel when you are nigh,
I must forgive in you."

To Madame de Surgeres.—*Avarice.*

"Though strange perhaps your sin may seem,
It would be mine if will'd by you;
Were you my treasure, well I deem
I should become a miser too."

To Madame de Chauvelin.—*Gluttony.*

"If on your sin I chance to muse
The while your angel form I see;
Methinks that I could almost choose
Something that you could eat, to be."

To Mademoiselle de Cice.—*Indolence.*

"Iris! so sure you are to please,
No effort you need make;
Yield then to Indolence; your ease
You now may freely take."

To Madame de Courteilles.—*Anger.*

"Be angry, Chloris, if you will,
Henceforth your anger cannot harm—
Wait to exert its power until
You meet with those you fail to charm."

We give six of them. Those who wish to see the seventh will find it in Grimm's *Journal.* Everything might be said in those days, provided it was said in verse.

"Very good," said Chauvelin, coolly folding up the paper.

"Very good!—Is that all you have to say?"

"I knew long ago that my brother did not want for wit. May I go, Madam?"

"Where, if you please?"

"You don't know whence I come—why concern yourself about where I am going?"

"Malicious man! No, you shall not go."

"Indeed!"

"Not before you have told us or shown us something new. —Madame de Courteilles, Mrs. *Anger*, come and help to keep M. de Chauvelin."

Madame de Courteilles was close at hand—"Must I be angry?" said she.

"If you like. It will be according to the couplet—a proof that you fail to charm me." She smiled. He rejoined his friend; and soon after they entered the minister's private room.

"Always imprudent, Chauvelin!" said the latter. "You set me upon thorns. To come to me publicly! to tell me before forty persons that I knew you were at Paris! Why not as well say that it was I who got you out of prison?"

"Everybody knows it."

"Perhaps. But that is not a reason for proclaiming it on the housetops."

"Emotion, my lord!—acknowledgments"—and the abbé assumed an air of gravity, which was never usual with him but when jesting.

"Oh, indeed! acknowledgments!"

"Well, yes; I acknowledge"—

"What?"

"That you must want my services, as you have brought me out of prison."

"That may be. But, gentlemen, let us speak seriously. You know what is passing at Versailles. You are aware of the project for beginning the attack by the overthrow of Father Desmarêts."

"An intrigue!" said La Chalotais; "I stand aloof."

"And I," said the abbé. "Fair fight, if you will, even if I was to return to my rock for ten years; but no intrigues."

"Take no part in it, gentlemen; stand aloof! Who asks you? If you wished it, what could you do to overthrow Desmarêts? The king would only need to know that you were of the plot to keep his man indefinitely."

"I am well aware of that," said Chauvelin. "What I meant to say, and La Chalotais also, I do not doubt, is, that petty means have had their day; that we are strong enough to do without them; that"—

"What! would you have a riot?"

"No, my lord, a revolution—an open and decided decree of Parliament for the suppression of the Jesuits. And we should then see if his Majesty would keep his"—

"The deuce!—if these walls had ears, you would not be sent to Mont St. Michel for ten years only. And if it was known that I listened to these fine things myself"—

"You would go there with me, my lord Fouquet."*

"To resume, if you please. This beginning, it seems, is not to your taste?"

"It seems that in your capacity of a great minister, you persist in beginning by petty means!"

"Petty!—that depends on circumstances. And first, do you know who I put in Desmarêts' place?"

"The Abbé de Narniers, doubtless."

"Father Bridaine, if you please."

"Oh! I object no longer; it is he who will not—besides, where can you lay hold of him?"

"Here."

"Here?"

* Fouquet, who had been at the head of the Finance department, and was disgraced on account of malversation.

"In five minutes, perhaps. You see I think of everything."

"Your lordship is a great minister."

"Oh! we come back to that conclusion?"

"For the present."

"Well—stop; is not that a carriage entering my court?"

"Yes."

"Go to the window—look! the court is lighted up."

"The carriage has stopped."

"Who is alighting?"

"No one yet—ah! a priest."

"It is my man. Go back to the drawing-room quickly, gentlemen."

"We should like to see him."

"Does he know you?"

"No."

"Well, stay till he comes in."

A servant appeared. The Duke did not give him time to speak.

"Show him in," said he, going to the door himself; and as the priest approached—"Come in, Father, come in—eh!"

It was Desmarêts.

M. de Choiseul had too much self-command to allow his surprise to last beyond the first glance; but that which rendered the situation singularly perplexing was, that his two friends knowing neither Bridaine nor Desmarêts by sight, eagerly bowed to the supposed Father Bridaine.

Desmarêts, although he had never seen Chauvelin, recognised him by his figure. This was easy enough, as we have said. He remained transfixed to the spot.

"Gentlemen, Father Desmarêts, the king's confessor," said the Duke with precipitation—for all this had passed in three seconds. "Messieurs de la Chalotais and Chauvelin," pursued he, presenting them in their turn to the petrified Jesuit.

"Gentlemen," said Desmarêts, "I did not expect to meet you here, any more than my lord, as I perceive, expected my visit. I was surprised at being so promptly introduced."

Whilst he was making this observation—"It is singular," thought he, "that I should arrive here precisely like Father Bridaine at the archbishop's."

"I should be distressed," pursued he, "at having intruded upon a secret; for my lord said, 'Come in, Father,' happily he did not add the name."

This was asking for the name in question; but as no one answered—"In short," resumed he, smiling, "it is evident that you did not expect the king's confessor."

An imperceptible glance, exchanged at these words between Chauvelin and his friend, did not escape the Jesuit. He had had wind of the plot formed against him. There was now no doubt left; the person for whom he had been taken was some one who was to be put in his place; and might not this some one be Father Bridaine?

"Sit down, Father," said Choiseul. "If these gentlemen are in the way, they will be good enough to leave us for a few minutes."

"Certainly," said they.

"No, gentlemen, no. I shall not be sorry that you hear what I have come to say to his lordship."

This beginning was serious. Choiseul, as he turned round to take a seat, quietly bolted the door: he did not wish to run the risk of the true and false Bridaine meeting each other.

"Gentlemen," resumed the confessor, "when a town is besieged, it is generally agreed upon that the buildings on which a black flag is hoisted shall not be fired on. These are the churches, hospitals—sacred edifices, in short, or that ought to be so. I desire to hoist one of these flags. In the midst of the shots aimed against us from every side, I should wish that

there might be at least one spot considered as inviolable and sacred. You have, I think, understood me. You know what has passed at Versailles. I have attained a victory over the king at which all the friends of religion and morality should rejoice; and yet I have reason to believe that many people are sorry for it. Will you, or will you not, allow me to carry on my work? Will you respect the edifice, as yet so fragile, that I have succeeded in raising upon the ruins of his vices? Would you rather he should lose his soul, than that it should be saved by the ministry of a Jesuit? That is my question; it is candid. The answer, I have no doubt, will be equally so."

"Will your lordship allow me to reply?" inquired M. de la Chalotais.

"Reply!" said the minister, who was only too glad to remain silent.

"Father," said the attorney-general, "your idea of the black flag appears to me so correct, that I request your permission to carry it out further. The places so marked are respected in time of war: true; but if it is discovered that they are peopled by enemies, and that, under cover of this flag, intended to avert the besiegers' fire, attacks are preparing, mines are being dug—what think you? should they be still respected?

"Such is our position, who are the enemies of your order. I say 'of your order,' and not of the respectable men that are to be found in its ranks. If we are led to involve you all in our attacks, it is the fault of your constitution, your unity, and of those vows of absolute obedience which make an army of your order, and of each of you a soldier to fight against, even had we no quarrel with him individually. If we batter down all that you build up or defend, it is that not one of your undertakings, however excellent in itself, is not closely linked with the whole, or does not shelter things that we reprobate. You

carry Christianity to the savages, but it is a Christianity disfigured; you civilize them, but just enough to bring them into subjection to yourselves. As moralists, you are inexorable on some great occasions, accommodating and remiss on others. As masters of public instruction, knowledge and ignorance alike serve your ends. You excel in teaching literature in your colleges, and superstition in our villages; geometry to some, and mysticism to others. And all this is one and the same work; and all the men occupied with things so different, make but one in reality; they could not, if they would, do otherwise. In vain you would assert that you are nothing more than the king's confessor; in vain you would wish to be nothing more. The single fact of your occupying a post, constitutes you a sentinel; you inevitably become one of the twenty thousand points of that weapon of which it is said that the handle is at Rome, and the point everywhere.

"It is evident that in aiming at you, we run the risk of touching things that ought to be secure from all attacks; but here again, whose fault is it? Why are you everywhere, in everything, and of everything? To confine ourselves to a single fact, you are the confessors of all the sovereigns of Europe—candidly speaking, can you believe that this is natural, necessary, or ordered of God?"

"Why not?" said the Jesuit.

"Why not? In fact we should not be able mathematically to prove the contrary to you; but that is no reason why we should not see clearly that God cannot have designed to concentrate in you alone all the life and strength of the Church."

"Sir," resumed Desmarêts, "I see, what indeed I already knew, that we must expect no quarter from you; but you do not answer the question which I had the honour of addressing to his lordship, and to which, I confess, I should prefer that he would himself favour me with an answer."

"What question?" said the minister.

"Has your lordship forgotten it? I asked if I should be allowed to finish the work that I had just begun with the king."

"Sir," said the Abbé de Chauvelin, "might not his lordship ask you in his turn, why you have so long delayed beginning this work? What! for seven years past you have borne the title of the king's confessor; for thirty-eight, if I am not mistaken, this office has been given up to your Society, by favour of extraordinary negotiations with which you are better acquainted than I;* and because the king has suddenly felt some regret at excesses which you have not prevented, shall you have a right to shelter yourself behind this beginning of victory? Truly, Fathers, the best way of proving that these functions belong to you, would be, I think, to perform them with rather more success. So long as kings choose to be their own masters, you can do nothing; as soon as they submit to you, you do too much—and we want neither a profligate nor a bigot on the throne."

Choiseul, aware of the usual boldness of the indomitable councillor, saw what was coming. He tried to calm him by signs and looks. Chauvelin was no longer in a condition to attend to him.

"No," resumed he, in a still louder tone, "neither a debauchee nor a bigot! What is it to us, whether he pass from the arms of a mistress to those of a Jesuit, if it is but to receive the same suggestions of servility as a man, and despotism as a king? What is it to us"—

"M. de Chauvelin! M. de Chauvelin!" said the Duke, almost in a tone of supplication. But Chauvelin heeded him still less.

* A secret article of the treaty concluded with Spain, on the occasion of the projected marriage between Louis XV. and an Infanta. The first confessor of the king had been the Abbé Fleury, author of the Ecclesiastical History.

"What is it to us that he changes tutelage, if he himself continues to be the indolent guardian of his kingdom, who rouses from his lethargy only to strike, to silence, and to crush? We see personified in him every abuse that centuries have heaped up. Every evil"—

"Chauvelin, I order you to be silent!" cried the minister, almost beside himself.

"Let him alone, my lord, let him alone," said Desmarêts, quietly. "It is well to be acquainted with the good—and the ill offices—towards his Majesty of his faithful lieges of the Parliament."

"Excuse him, Father, excuse him. He says all he thinks, and, I am sure, rather more than less. This will not go beyond ourselves, I hope?"

"Beyond ourselves, your Grace? It is not, I think, under the seal of confession that these gentlemen have opened their hearts to us. They may reassure themselves, however"—

"Reassure ourselves?" interrupted Chauvelin. "Do we look as if we were afraid?"

"Afraid? no, gentlemen, that was not my meaning. I know well enough that there are those for whom martyrdom has its charms, especially when they get out of danger at an easy rate," added the Father, looking at Chauvelin, "and when they have friends to soften it—to abridge it."

This was followed by a smile, meant for the minister.

"All I intended to say," pursued he, "was that I should take care not to name the persons, when repeating to the king what I have heard by chance here. But when next I see his Majesty disposed to reckon on the fidelity of the Parliament, you will agree with me, that it would be treason not to tell him the truth. What does your lordship think?"

"I have no advice to give you."

"Indeed!"

"Nor to receive from you, sir. Give advice to the king, if he asks you for it."

"In fact, he has asked my advice on one point; and the real object of my visit was to ascertain more clearly what I ought to answer."

"The question was a serious one, it appears?"

"Very serious. He asked me if a king could conscientiously keep a minister, dear to the enemies of the throne, leagued with"—

"With them!—I!" exclaimed the Duke, turning pale.

"Come," whispered M. de la Chalotais; "the retractation is beginning."

"Leagued with them," resumed the Father, "receiving them at his house, in his drawing-room, in his private apartment"—

"Sir, the king cannot have said that."

"Not exactly. I arrange matters. I put facts where the king had only suspicions—and suspicions well founded, as you see."

The minister was confounded. Desmarêts triumphed, but like a Jesuit. He had not before appeared so humble, or his eyes so completely cast down. To have seen his kindling glance, the lids must have been pierced through. When he thought the arrow had sunk deep enough, he rose.

"Are you leaving us, Father?" said Choiseul; and the minister cast a half angry, half supplicating glance upon his two imprudent friends. He could not venture, in their presence, to enter upon an explanation that they would qualify as cowardly; and, even alone with Desmarêts, how to begin this explanation without lowering himself.

"Are you going to leave us?" repeated he—for Desmarêts had made no reply. He had taken up his hat in silence, and prepared to go out.

"I am expected at Versailles," said he at last.

"By the king?"

"By the king."

Choiseul went forward a few steps, as if to show him out. A violent struggle was visible on his countenance. All at once, as the Jesuit opened the door; "Come this way," said he, "come this way!" and, opening another door himself, he drew him after him.

Desmarêts appeared to hesitate; then followed him, and the door closed upon them.

The two friends looked at each other, the one indignant, the other laughing.

"Well?" said the latter.

"Well?" repeated Chauvelin.

"After that, reckon if you will upon the courage of a minister!"

"Did you believe there was a minister existing, philosopher enough to sacrifice his place?"

"He is going to promise all that the other requires."

"It is for us to release him from his promises."

"To release him?"

"Yes, by taking from him all possibility of performing them."

"So we are to go forward?"

"Before three months have elapsed, I shall get the Parliament to give me an order to lay before it a report of the constitutions of the Society."

"*Perge, sequar*"—

"By the way, have you thought of another thing?"

"What thing?"

"That, if the Jesuit had gone out that way, he would have found himself face to face with his successor."

"The successor will not succeed, since Choiseul is making up matters with the other. When he comes"—

"He is come. While you were speaking, I heard the sound of another carriage. I looked. It was another priest; he had on gaiters."

"It is he. Let us return to the drawing-room. We shall see him as we pass."

But there was no one in the ante-room.

"He has been shown elsewhere," said Chauvelin.

"Or he has been tired of waiting. He is little of a courtier, they say." And they returned to mingle with the groups, the hum of whose voices resounded through the spacious apartments.

It was into his library that Choiseul had taken Desmarêts. On one side of the room there were three windows, which at this moment admitted no other light than that of the lamps without. The rest was dark. A few scattered seats might be distinguished before the first of these windows.

"Sit down, Father; we are alone—let us converse," said the minister, in a voice that he tried to render calm.

"Let us converse," said Desmarêts, the more composed outwardly that he began to be more agitated.

"Is what you have just told me true?"

"Perfectly true."

Upon this there was a long silence. The feeble reflection of the lamps was thrown back from the ceiling on their imperturbable countenances. Both would have wished to see better; both were glad not to be better seen. It was Choiseul who resumed the conversation.

"You said that you came to speak to me with perfect openness."

"I have done so."

"Have you told me everything?"

"The king added a few words on your talents, your services"—

"Indeed!"

"He said that he should regret to lose them."

"I am happy"—

"But that he would not hesitate"—

"He would not hesitate"—

"Not for a moment, if he felt constrained by his conscience to do so."

"But you are his conscience."

"When he listens to me. He appeared, indeed, well inclined to listen to me. At one moment, I should only have had a word to say."

"And you did not say that word?"

"Should I be here? I asked for time. I said that the question was serious, that I wished to reflect upon it before God."

"Before God! very good; but you are not bound to abstain from reflecting a little upon it before men, and with men?" Choiseul had gradually drawn nearer. He had lowered his voice. The two chairs almost touched each other.

"Come," resumed he, "if you did not answer the question immediately, you had your reasons."

"Perhaps."

"And you had made certain calculations"—

"Indeed!"

"Which were perhaps correct."

"Do you think so?"

"I do not merely think so—I affirm it." He was growing bolder. The Jesuit, on his part, had been inflexible long enough; he began to feel in a position to yield without loss.

"I affirm it," repeated Choiseul. "Must I tell you what these calculations were?"

"It would be curious."

"Curious, if you will. I do not ask for yes or no. Listen."

"I am listening."

"'I shall go and see the minister,' you thought. 'I shall begin by sounding him, then frightening him. When he sees the sword hanging over his head, he will make me overtures —advances'"—

"Go on."

"—'to which I shall remain insensible until they become more positive. Then I shall begin to listen. He will offer, if not to protect us openly, which he could not do without disowning his own opinions, at least to repair quietly the mischief already done to us. He will promise to put a stop, as far as may be possible, to the prosecution of the Parliament; he will promise not to think any longer of taking from me my charge of confessor. I, on my side'—you are still the speaker—'shall abstain from all hostile advice. I shall tell the king that he is mistaken; I shall keep him favourably disposed towards—towards the person he appeared to suspect; I'—do you say nothing? Have I guessed right?"

"You said that you would not ask me for yes or no."

"I forgot. 'In short'—it is you who speak again—'I shall come to an understanding with the minister, and we shall part friends.'"

"Friends?—that is saying much."

"Allies."

"That will be hard."

"What shall we say, then?"

"Another question? Try and remember that I am not to answer. Go on."

"I have done."

"Is it my turn to make suppositions?"

"If you like—unless you think as I do, that it would be just as well to speak out plainly."

"Be it so. Let us speak out plainly. What you offer, I accept. But I require more."

"More? What, then?"

"Positive and formal engagements on a certain number of points."

"Propose them—I am listening."

"In the first place, a complete rupture with Madame de Pompadour."

"If she leaves Court, that will be easy."

"A rupture with the members of Parliament."

"Not so easy. But I can let them see that they must not reckon upon me. Do you think that I am really their friend?"

"No; men in power can never be the friends of those who would shake that power. You were only their friend out of hatred to us; and now, as you are going to be our friend"—

"No raillery. Is that all?"

"Not yet. Without entirely breaking with the gentlemen of the Encyclopædia, stop the publication of it indefinitely."

"It is stopped."

"I know it; but they boast of obtaining authorization to go on through your means."

"They shall not have it. What next?"

"That you send back Father Bridaine into the country."

"Father Bridaine!—Who told you?"

The minister was thunderstruck.

"Ah!" resumed the other, with the same smile as before; "I guessed right!"

"They guess everything," muttered Choiseul. "I repeat it. You will send back Father Bridaine into the country."

"Send him back? He is free. But I can avoid seeing him."

"Good! you will not see him?"

"No; what next?"

"You will take from Narniers his office of preacher to the king."

"Narniers falls naturally with the Marchioness. But he was to preach on Sunday, and, until then, we cannot."

"Let him preach. It will be the funeral oration of the fallen system."

"You are pitiless."

"We have learned to be so."

"You were born so."

"Because we knew at our very birth what awaited us in the world. Listen, M. de Choiseul." The Jesuit had risen. His eyes sparkled.

"There are but two principles," resumed he, "in the world. What ordinary men call *good* and *evil*, we call *liberty* and *authority*. Liberty is the source of every evil, and the mother of every vice; authority is order, faith, virtue, and all in all. No! man was not born free. He is not, he cannot be, he never will be, free. Do you know why you philosophers, statesmen, despots of all kinds and denominations, hate us? It is not because we are despotic; it is because our despotism is bolder, more persevering, and more successful than yours. You contend against liberty because it is an obstacle to you; we, because we do not believe in it. You put man into fetters, and he struggles; we make a corpse of him, and he struggles no longer. But the secret of our strength is that we are ourselves but corpses in the hands of the power that supports and urges us on. Do you think that this power is at Rome? You are mistaken. The handle, as well as the point of the weapon, is everywhere. You think it is personified in certain men? You are mistaken. All our superiors are corpses; our general is a corpse; the Pope himself is a corpse. Either look for this power nowhere, or look for it everywhere, for it is everywhere. It is at Paris, it is at

Rome, it is in the heart of the deserts of the New World, it is wherever there is a human being; because, wherever man is, there are passions, mind, heart—in a word, there is a slave waiting for a master. It is in vain you hate us; you, all who pretend to reign over mankind, whether by divine or human right, whether in your own name or in the name of the people—you are our allies, our fellow-labourers, our brethren in this unceasing work of subjugating mankind. Destroy us, and you will meet with us again under other forms; what do I say?—you will find us in your very selves. Scatter the spirit concentrated in us, and you will breathe it in the atmosphere. Yes, we are an incarnate despotism; but despotism is in nature, in man, in God"—

Suddenly, whilst the Jesuit in his intoxication was defying thus fearfully all human liberty, a voice was heard from the dark end of the gallery, uttering these words:—"*Ubi Spiritus Domini, ibi libertas.*"*—"*In libertatem vocati estis, fratres. Quâ igitur libertate Christus vos liberavit, in eâ state, et nolite iterum jugo servitutis contineri.*"†

The voice was solemn and sorrowful. It seemed as though it joined a prayer for the blasphemer to the condemnation of his blasphemy; and, slowly, while the voice was speaking, Desmarêts and Choiseul saw a man coming forward whose glance riveted them to the spot.

"Bridaine!" exclaimed the Duke.

"Bridaine!" murmured the other.

Then Bridaine paused.

"Bridaine, did you say? Say, his voice. It is indeed his —it is he himself; but who is he that spoke to you?"

He came forward a step or two, and stopped in front of the Jesuit.

"It is not I, Father; it is St. Paul. Had you never

* 2 Cor. iii. 17. † Gal. v. 1.

read those words that I could not keep back on hearing yours? Here, then, thanks to you, is the fatal error of antiquity revived in the Christian world! 'My yoke is easy,' said Christ; and the condition of humanity, according to you, is to bow beneath a yoke of iron. He called men his 'sheep;' to you, they are but beasts of burden! And these are the lessons that you give the great ones of the earth! This is the way you teach them to respect the image of God in their fellow-creatures, and the seal of Christ on the foreheads of those bowed down before them! It is well. Go on, unite together, reign, crush, tread under foot. But a time will come, believe me, when God will choose to reign in His turn. A voice far more terrible than mine will cry out, 'Cain, where is thy brother?' and you will not be able to reply, like the first murderer, 'Am I my brother's keeper?'—for it was yours to keep those sheep that Christ had purchased with His own blood. You had promised it; you had sworn it. 'Cain, what hast thou done with thy brother?' that voice will repeat. 'What have I done with him, Lord?'—a corpse."

"My lord," pursued the missionary, "I have heard too much not to understand that I have nothing further to do here, even were it not one of the articles of your treaty. Chance, which I shall call henceforth a providential direction, had led me into this gallery, that a priest might not be seen waiting too long in an ante-chamber. An undefinable feeling, which you will not, I hope, do me the injustice to call curiosity, held me motionless. I felt as it were a hand upon me, that paralysed my movements; I heard as it were a voice vibrating in my heart, which said to me, 'Remain; listen. Dost thou think to know men? Thou knowest them not as yet.' And I remained, and I listened; and I trembled at hearing what that religion of love, liberty, and forbearance may become in the hearts of certain men who call themselves its ministers. I saw a states-

man ready to do anything to remain in office. I saw a *philosopher* humbling himself before a Jesuit. I saw the animosities of both blended in the common desire of domination and support. Go on, gentlemen, go on. You are worthy to understand each other."

He went out. But the two others did not go on. A quarter of an hour afterwards Desmarêts was on the road to Versailles.

CHAPTER X.

But that quarter of an hour had sufficed to weaken, almost to obliterate, the impression of this touching scene. The king's confessor was not a man to feel how much more truth and depth there was in Bridaine's reproaches, than in the declamations of infidels. As much a stranger to the spirit of Christianity as to the spirit of the philosophers of the day, he did not understand an attack in the name of the Gospel a whit better than a sarcasm in the name of reason. He therefore calculated quietly enough, as he leaned back in his carriage, the probable results of his journey to Paris. The interests of morality appeared to him to be admirably conciliated in this affair, with his own, and those of his order. He did not go the length of imagining the cause gained, for, besides being far from reckoning seriously upon the friendship, or even the neutrality of the Duke de Choiseul, he well knew that such storms as these are not of a nature to be appeased at the word of a minister, or even of a king. But Desmarêts had just brought this very minister who might have hastened the explosion, to tremble for himself. He had extorted promises from him, which might bind him down for a few days; and during these few days, the complete disgrace of the Marchioness might deprive him of his principal supporter with the king. As for himself, Desmarêts purposed to keep the promises he had made to the minister, for the present. He would quiet the king's conscience with regard to him, but by repre-

senting him as in open rupture with the disgraced Marchioness, and accomplish, thus, the division of his two greatest enemies. Things might go on upon this footing for a year or two. The king might die; the Jesuits were sure of the Dauphin, and yet he was universally beloved. France, after having nearly proved their tomb, might become their citadel.

On arriving at Versailles—it was past midnight—Desmarêts perceived lights in the king's apartments. He paid no attention to it at first. The king always retired late. Hardly, however, had he entered the château, when this circumstance recurred to him. He had not intended seeing the king again till next morning. What if he were to go to him at once? Either the king, being in the same mind, this eagerness would be agreeable to him, or he might be hesitating, and then, he could not too soon be strengthened in his purpose. As he had free admission to every part of the château, he reached the king's apartments in a moment. The attendants were in waiting as usual, till his Majesty should retire for the night.

"Is the king still up?" inquired he.

"Yes, Father."

"Is he alone?"

"No, Father."

"Who is with him?"

"Madame" ——

"Who did you say?" interrupted he.

"The Marchioness."

He became alarmingly pale. At the moment of his arrival, he fancied he had observed something more than astonishment at seeing him arrive at such an hour. One of the attendants had smiled; another had turned away, as if to conceal a laugh. Before asking the question, the confessor had read the reply. He went away. He was accompanied to the door as usual with every mark of respect, but it was hardly closed after him,

when an explosion of smothered laughter, sent home the dagger deep into his heart.

What had taken place?

Let us go back once more a few hours, and penetrate into the apartments of Louis XV.

Lights had just been brought in. It was about the same moment at which we have seen Rabaut arrive at d'Alembert's, and Bridaine at the palace of the archbishop.

We find ourselves in what were called, in the jargon of the Court, the *petits appartements—little*, in fact, not only in comparison with the immensity of the château, but also, and chiefly, from the fabulous refinements of luxury and comfort with which a king, sated with pleasure of every kind, had overloaded them. Louis XIV. had had his; but they were only called in his time, *appartements intérieurs*. They were plainly fitted up, and the king never resided in them.

It was during the Regency that the *petits appartements*, properly so called, were created. The Regent required them, not to conceal his amours, for they were not things concealed by any one, but his voluptuous suppers,—his daily, or rather nightly, low drinking-bouts.

Louis XV., before himself becoming vicious, adopted from other tastes what vice had invented. Even in his early youth, he was weary and almost terrified in those vast galleries, which had been the delight of his magnificent great-grandfather, because he felt that he filled them by his presence. A plain citizen's fireside suited him better; and this fireside, graced by the virtues of the queen, had been at first a sanctuary inaccessible to every evil breath from without. *Ennuyé* at his very birth, Louis XV. was the same there as everywhere else,—but in the character of a good husband and father. His vices came on; and then, the divinity being changed, the decorations of the temple required a change

also. Besides, the taste of the day led to it. Luxury had made immense progress; not that kind of intelligent progress which is compatible with the noblest tendencies, but narrow as to the means employed, insignificant in its results, false as regarded art, and dangerous in respect of morals.

Every invention of these days of decline naturally found a place in the king's *petits appartements*. Every month, every week, brought its tribute of wonders and trifles. In order to describe them, we should require a pen mended with the penknife of mother-of-pearl and jewels that was admired on Madame de Pompadour's gold inkstand.

But soon, as if the very neighbourhood of the state apartments had been a restraint, it was to the Château de Choisy that the king sent his architects, his painters, his decorators, with orders to outdo all they had before done. They took him at his word. Millions were expended; but Choisy had become one of the wonders of the world, according to the chronicles of boudoirs. It was there that those famous little tables, called *officieuses* or *dumb waiters*, masterpieces of the mechanician Loriot, were seen for the first time. Thanks to them, there was no need of importunate and babbling valets to witness the voluptuous orgies of the night. Each guest had his own. Dishes and wines of every kind, fruits, pastry, preserves, all you could imagine or wish for, you had but to write it down, and to touch a spring. The table disappeared for a moment, and reappeared spread. This may seem like the Arabian Nights. It was Choisy under Louis XV.

At last Choisy itself had seemed too like Versailles. It was a château. The king allowed himself to be persuaded that he must have what was then called his *bonbonnière*. Thus Bellevue was built, which sprung up as if by enchantment. The gardens were laid out after the poetic description of the island of Alcina, in Ariosto; the apartments were such, that

one was tempted to ask, on visiting them, if a fairy could have done more. There, Madame de Pompadour was the real sovereign. The king liked to be there as under her roof, and to enjoy, far from all noise, the refinements of ease that she strove to invent.

But we were at Versailles; let us return thither.

In a drawing-room of the *petits appartements*, two men are seated at the two corners of the fireplace. They do not see each other, and do not seem to wish it. One of them is almost lying back in an immense arm-chair. His countenance is noble, but expressive of intense weariness; he does not appear to enjoy the comfort usually sought and found in such a posture. The other is seated, a little less at his ease, but appears more comfortable. However, he seems much dissatisfied with this motionless state. He yawns occasionally, but without noise or movement, as if he did not wish his neighbour to perceive it. At last a dialogue begins between these two personages.

"Richelieu!"

"Sire!"

"I am tired."

"What would your Majesty have me do?"

Let us remind those who might be surprised at the tone of this reply, that Richelieu was Louis XV.'s intimate friend. In public, the king had not a courtier who was more respectful; in private, they were like two equals. But Richelieu never forgot himself less than in these familiar conversations. What the king mistook for perfect nature, was in fact art carried to the highest perfection. For half a century past, the Duke de Richelieu had summed up in his person all the accomplishments and all the vices of the gentlemen of that period. Brave and cunning, proud and cringing, noble in his manners, and ignoble in his tastes, he had continued, in spite

of his years, to be the man of fashion, the ideal which every one despaired of attaining. Those who thought proper to remark that he was sixty-four, that his eyebrows were dyed, that he wore rouge, that he was made up with false hips, a false chest, and false calves—were almost accused of calumny or jealousy. All this was well known. In any one else it would have been thought ridiculous; and yet in him the result was a figure and appearance which excited the envy of the youngest, the straightest, and the best-made men about Court.

The strangest part of all this was not that an old beau should have recourse to all these petty means in order to appear young; it was that a man of sense should have such confidence in them, and seriously fancy he deceived the sex by this miserable patching up of a frame long since worn out. Women! next to the king and the king's favour, they were his world. But he was not satisfied with falling in love himself; he imagined, he gave out, that they were in love with him; he boasted, when past sixty, of inspiring a passion as strong as those he himself had felt at five-and-twenty. Besides, this was another way of paying his court to Louis XV. The king being at least ten years younger, the conquests of the first gentleman of the chamber were a delicate means of promising him ten years more of youth and of voluptuousness.

Rather a long pause had followed his "What would you have me do?" He had said it in the tone of a man who will not answer any longer, because he has already given advice which has not been followed.

"Richelieu!" repeated the king.

"Sire!"

"I tell you I am tired to death."

"I have answered that I cannot help it."

"Come, amuse me."

"That is what your great-grandfather, Louis XIV., used to say to Madame de Maintenon."

"Well?"

"Madame de Maintenon used to reply that he was not *amusable*."

"You are mistaken, Richelieu. No one, not even his mistress, and still less his wife,* would have answered Louis XIV. impertinently."

"Which means—does it not?—that I have just given an impertinent answer to Louis XV."

"Nearly so."

"Then I beg your pardon, Sire. Madame de Maintenon did not make that answer—be it so; she only thought it—and said it to two or three people who charitably repeated it to the whole Court. Would you like better that I should do so?"

"Great news, indeed, you would give! as if all Europe did not know already that I am *ennuyé!*"

"Well, it is not I who say so."

"I believe you. No one is more with me than you. To publish that I am *ennuyé*, would be to confess yourself perfectly *ennuyeux*."

"Thank you, Sire."

"Come, have you positively nothing to say to me? positively nothing?"

"We have just been walking for two hours in your gardens. I have told you hundreds and hundreds of things; I have exhausted the Court, the town"—

"Really?"

"It is true that you were not listening to me in the least, and that—but stop; there is something I forgot to show you."

"What is it?"

"A letter from M. de Voltaire."

* It is known that Madame de Maintenon was his wife for twenty-nine years.

"M. de Richelieu, you know that I dislike that man and all that proceeds from him."

"The more reason for reading his letter; it will amuse you so much the better."

"No."

"Let it be no, then." He put it back into his pocket, and was silent. A moment afterwards, the king asked—

"What does he say to you, then, in that letter?"

"He draws his own portrait."

"It must be curious."

"Very curious; but your Majesty positively will not look at it."

"Certainly not.—Read it to me."

"Oh! your Majesty wishes to be able to say conscientiously that you have not *looked* at it!"

"I am no Jesuit, Richelieu."

"I know it, Sire; there are those, however, who are not quite so sure of it as I am."

"What do you mean?"

"Tell me whom you frequent, and I will tell you."

"Do I frequent the Jesuits?"

"No; but those who say so will now have fair play"—

"I have forbidden you to speak to me of these matters."

"'The king is good,' used to be said in the days of Henry IV.; 'it is a pity that he has *cotton* in his ears.'"*

"Richelieu!"

"I shall hold my tongue; but others will speak—your Majesty may depend upon it."

"Read."

"'FERNEY, *July* 15, 1760.—There is little probability, my lord, that I should have the imprudence to appear before you'"—

* The Jesuit Cotton, his confessor.

"Is it possible you have invited him to come and see you?" interrupted the king.

"Vaguely—from politeness."

"Richelieu, while I reign, that man shall never set his foot in Paris."

The king now drew himself up. In his rare moments of energy and determination, he recalled his formidable great grandfather to the life. There were the same eyes, the same voice, and almost the same majesty. Voltaire had already had the honour of throwing him into this feverish agitation, in which his expression of countenance seemed to say—"Am I still king?" At that name, which hovered like a perpetual sarcasm over that which was or had been sacred, the old Bourbon instinctively put his hand to his crown; he fixed it more firmly on his head, as if he felt this breath of destruction shake it.

"He at Paris!" resumed the Marshal; "I assure you he does not wish it in the least; he knows too well how much he gains by being heard from a distance; it makes him a sort of oracle, and, in the eyes of fools, his greatness is increased in proportion to the distance between Paris and Ferney.—May I go on?"

"Yes."

"'—— to appear before you in the state in which I am. Everybody talks of your bag-wig, and I can only wear a night-cap. Every one who approaches you would take their oath that you are only three or four and thirty at the utmost"—

"How old is he?" asked the king.

"Alas! Sire, he is only two years older than I; he is of '94, and I of '96.—I proceed: 'You do not walk,' he pursues, 'you run. You are on foot all day. You would command an army as briskly as ever'"—"Faith, I believe so," muttered the Marshal; but the king appeared not to under-

stand the hint. Throughout Europe, it was often asked why Richelieu no longer appeared at the head of the army. It was the less comprehensible because he was known to be more in favour with the king than ever. Louis XV. had perhaps more conclusive reasons than those that were generally attributed to him. He resumed:

"'—— more briskly than ever; as for me, I could not act as your secretary, much less your courier. The reason is that the spindles which I used to call my legs, can no longer carry your humble servant, and that my eyes are completely *à la Chaulieu*, encircled by a thick red-and-white rim'"—

"Enough!" cried the king; "enough! I shall have this living mummy before me, with his horrible red rims round his eyes."

"Your Majesty well knows that M. de Voltaire is by no means so frightful as he is pleased to make himself. It is his hobby to be old"—

"As it is yours to be young. Do you know what I was thinking of just now while I listened to you? I was asking myself which was the greatest fool."

"Your Majesty is very obliging."

"All things considered, I think it is he."

"Indeed!"

"Yes; but it will soon be you. Nature will prove him to be right every day more and more, and prove you to be in the wrong."

"So much the worse for nature."

"In fact, no one knows you better than M. de Voltaire. Not satisfied with turning you into ridicule"—

"He turn me into ridicule?"

"Don't you suppose that he was laughing at you in his sleeve when he wrote these lines?—Well, my poor Richelieu, you are a greater fool than I supposed. What! don't you un-

derstand that it is to flatter you that he makes himself out so ugly, and you so handsome? and do you think him capable of paying his court to any one in sincerity? I tell you, then, that nobody is more disposed than he to laugh at your bag-wig, your rouge, your patches, and your perfumes. Stop, let me see—those verses, *A Roast all Garlic*—you know them, of course?"

"No, Sire."

"Then I shall have the pleasure of telling you something that you don't know; that does not often happen:

'A roast all garlic and a lord all amber,
At supper, to our guests we would propose:
Whenever Richelieu comes into the chamber,
Be sure—be sure'—

"I have lost a word"—

"'Be sure to guard your heart'"—

"That is it—

'Be sure to guard your heart, and stop your nose.'"

"Then you knew the verses?—What did you mean?"

"I thought your Majesty was speaking of satirical verses."

"And these are not satirical, then?"

"No, indeed. 'Be sure to guard your heart!'—that is the highest praise I ever aimed at, Sire."

"And 'stop your nose'?"

"Yes; but why? Because I am *all amber*, says the author—many others are not."

"Come, seriously speaking, at what age do you mean to be old?"

"Ten years before your Majesty." The king shrugged his shoulders, and threw himself back in his arm-chair.

There was another silence; at length—

"Richelieu, what o'clock is it?"

"Nearly nine, Sire."

"Nine! only nine o'clock!—Tell me there are people who pretend that time flies!"

"Time is willing enough; but we must help it on a little."

"Help it, then, for God's sake, help it!—Don't you see that I am perishing?" And the king rose, stamping his foot on the ground.

Richelieu rose also, for he would not have allowed himself, even in a tête-à-tête, to remain seated while the king stood; but he leaned on the chimney-piece, and said nothing.

The king walked up and down before him, his hands behind his back, and his head bent down. All at once, stopping and looking him full in the face, he said—

"Richelieu, this cannot go on."

"May I give orders to bring it to an end?"

"I have given my word"—

"To a Jesuit!"

"To a priest."

"What business is it of his?"

"You know very well that I sent for him."

"It is not, perhaps, the wisest thing that your Majesty ever did in your life. Where would have been the harm, if things had gone on as they have been for the last twenty years?"

"Never mind; I have promised"—

"To a subject?"

"No; to my Master—to God."

"Faith, Sire, if your Majesty takes up that tone, I must tell you that you will not find me very edifying company. You will edify me, of course.—So to-morrow the *Parc-aux-cerfs* will be closed?"

"Who says that?"

"Nobody; but it is the natural consequence of the excellent frame of mind in which I perceive that you are. If God is so terribly angry at your intercourse with Madame de"—

"Don't pronounce that name again."

"In short, with a great lady, why should He be less displeased—He who they say sees everything—at your obscure pleasure down there? There is no medium; either you will not be damned at all, or you will be damned just as much for for the *Parc-aux-cerfs* as for—as for the rest. Did not Desmarêts tell you so?'

"Desmarêts spoke only of the Marchioness."

"I thought so. Just like your confessors, your Jesuits, above all! Appearances, always appearances! Reform what the world sees—reform that, or you will be damned. What God only sees—bah! never mind it; do as you please about that. I should like to show them, if I were king—and in truth, without being king, I show it to them well enough—I should like to show them, I say, that I am, and that I mean to be, my own master in one case as well as in the other, in public as well as in secret."

"Free to lose one's soul? we are only too free to do that."

"Come, Sire, once more, if you take up that tone, I give in. Let us leave the cant of the confessional, and try to simplify the question. Here we have a king still young"—

"Hold your tongue."

"A king who is likely to perish from ennui, if he must give up the society of a woman that he loves"—

"No, no."

"That he has loved."

"If you like."

"In short, whose society is indispensable to him. They wish to make him send this woman away. She must go, then. She must leave the palace which has become her home—her heart oppressed with grief—and the ungrateful"—

"Bravo! bravo! Richelieu! This would be admirable in a novel."

Although the Marshal felt very little in general for women forsaken by their lovers, he could not help being struck by such cool egotism. Louis XV. all over was in that "bravo!" What signified it to him that his mistress should weep or not, that she accuse or not accuse him of weakness and ingratitude? It is for himself, for himself only, that he is bound to her. He is disposed to consider it laughable that any one should think otherwise. Twenty years before, after his illness at Metz, when the public joy manifested itself on his progress, "He appeared affected," wrote the Duchess de Châteauroux. "So he *is* capable of feelings of tenderness!" And she had been his mistress for two years.

"Well, no," resumed Richelieu, in a tone somewhat offended—"No; no romance. But"—

"Go on," said the king, "go on. What in truth can be more natural? Imagination—youth"—

"Sire, Louis the Great used to say that a king should never banter."

"Not even those who banter him?"

"I, banter?"

"What was that Idyll, then, of which you declaimed the first part?"

"Your Majesty surprises me. I had not thought I was so malicious; and to prevent my being so again, I shall be silent."

"No, no! but come to the point."

"Well, here it is. Your Majesty is consumed with ennui. There is but one person in the world who can dispel your ennui. This person is to be sent away. But if I were in your place for five minutes"—

"Well?"

"She should not go."

"Richelieu, you have been at the Bastile?"

"Yes, Sire."

"And do you remember what the Regent said when he sent you there?"

"The Regent did me the honour to say, that if I had four heads, there would be reason enough for cutting them off all four."

"If you had six now, there would be reason enough for cutting them all off, for giving me such advice."

"Alas! Sire, I have but one, and it is very much at your service. But I wish that before cutting it off, you would allow me to do one of those master-strokes which it has the reputation of planning and executing pretty well. Shall I?"

He was already near the door. The king laughed, but like a man who laughs that he may not have to speak seriously.

"M. de Voltaire is right—you do not walk; you run."

"I shall fly—may I?"

His hand was already raised and touched the lock.

"You are only three or four and thirty."

"Four-and-twenty—may I?—Yes."

He opened the door.

"Richelieu! Richelieu!" cried the king, rushing after him. But Richelieu was already far off.

The king returned slowly, and sat down in the same place. Although he was glad that the eagerness of the old Duke had spared him the distress of ordering what his conscience told him not to wish for, the acquiescence he had just given was not without some bitterness. It was not precisely remorse, but rather the feeling of his own weakness. He did not say, "I am doing wrong;" but rather, "I do not know what to do, what to wish." He considered the pleasures about to be restored to him, as imposed upon him by a fatality that pursued him and made him an indolent king, a man at the mercy of whoever chose to lead him; and although he had never seriously desired to rise out of the depth into which he had

sunk, his heart was oppressed, when, from time to time, at long intervals, some circumstance occurred which obliged him to sound it.

He sat waiting, motionless, with his eyes fixed, and his hands clasped. But it would have been in vain to seek any of those feelings of ardour in his heart, which at least give to errors the excuse of passion. "He goes coolly to perdition," Duclos said of him. This idea, although he did not realize it himself, accompanied him in all his excesses. He felt almost incessantly that vague annoyance experienced when something that we have purchased very dear, proves useless or burdensome to us. He felt the responsibility of sin heavy upon him, and yet he had none of its enjoyments. He plucked the forbidden fruit, and found no savour in it.

These impressions, strengthened by the religious feelings which had been revived in him for a few days past, assumed a more serious character than they were wont. If it was not remorse that he felt, it was something that approached it more nearly than usual. He had never felt the void so great, or the yoke so heavy.

"She is coming!" murmured he, "and I shall receive her; and all will begin over again. What a yoke! what an existence! and then, at the end—my God! my God!"

He trembled. He covered his face with his hands, as if to shut out the sight of some fearful apparition.

"But why, then," resumed he, as if in anger, "why so many temptations? What had I done to deserve that I should be surrounded by snares? No! I shall not be weighed in the same balance as other men—no! no! God would not be just."

He had risen, at these words, as one accused who defies his judges. Suddenly he appeared plunged in thought—a half smile, nervous and forced, trembled on his lips.

"God!" murmured he; "always God!"

Then still lower, as if he feared to hear his own voice, or to raise up avenging phantoms: "What do I know about it? what do they know?"

It was not the first time that he had sought in infidelity that peace which both vice and religion seemed to refuse him: vice, because it never can bestow it; religion, because it never bestows it on the vicious. He was unacquainted with the writings of the infidel party, and did not even allow them to be spoken of in his presence, but he knew in general what were the points which they denied, and this was enough to make him sometimes secretly endeavour to disbelieve in God, when the thought was troublesome to him. Besides, his faith rested upon no solid foundations, no serious study; it was with him a matter of tradition, of habit, of etiquette, a vague necessity at the very utmost. If he had not listened to the murmurs of infidelity, it was more from indolence than disdain or horror. Such as religion had been given him, such he kept it; he would have been less alarmed at the idea of losing it than at that of remodelling it. He detested the Encyclopædists as perturbators, who would have done much better, in his opinion, to let things take their course, and allow themselves to be carried along quietly with the stream. He persecuted those who were not Romanists, much less from a dislike to their creed, of which he had scarcely any idea, than from a horror of hearing questions agitated into which he had no wish to search. How many men are in the same case! How many rigorous anti-Protestants who are but a step removed from total infidelity!

Thus he now and then overleaped the narrow space that remained between his persecuting faith and the infidelity of his day. But it was only by fits and starts; the same weakness of character prevented him from being either a Christian or an infidel. He soon fell back into his lethargy; a feeling

of bitter depression was all that remained after the dangerous effort. Such was his state of mind that evening, during the short absence of his very unscrupulous confidant. After having gone through feelings of annoyance, regret, anger, and rebellion, he fell back once more upon himself. He was the same as he was every day; the Louis XV. of the last twenty years, the frigid lover expecting one who had long ceased to kindle any emotion, either in the heart or the senses, but whose yoke had become a thing necessary to him—almost a condition of his existence.

She came at last. He received her as if nothing had passed between them. She, however, had felt deeply on seeing the master's messenger return; we say "return," for it was from him she had received the news of her disgrace. They had never been very friendly to each other, but it was rather from distrust than antipathy. Mutually jealous of their intimacy with the king, each calculated privately on the injury that might possibly be received from the other, and each found, in this calculation, good reasons for keeping quiet. The Duke felt that if she were to take it into her head to deprive him of the king's good graces, she might still succeed; she perceived, on her side, that it would be by no means impossible for Richelieu to dethrone a mistress, to whom the king was bound by no other tie than habit. However, that which alarmed her most—her age, was in reality the very thing that secured her the Marshal's neutrality, or, in time of need, his assistance. Were she to be dethroned, thought he, in all probability another would take her place. What might this other be? Probably much younger, and much less disposed to remain in union with him. Thus it was his interest to prolong the famous *friendship* of which the Abbé de Narniers had spoken. The king's *friend* was his equal; a mistress would infallibly become his superior.

He had not, therefore, hesitated to soften the rigour of his first message, the more so as he remembered that three years before, M. de Machault had been disgraced for having performed a similar mission somewhat too harshly. It may well be imagined that his proposals had been eagerly accepted. It had been agreed to do nothing with precipitation, to avoid all disagreeable scenes, and to wait patiently till ennui should bring back the king. Ennui, as we have seen, had done its work.

The Marchioness had remained at the château, waiting, as she said, a formal order to quit. The courtiers, indeed, had looked upon her disgrace as so very uncertain, that her court had scarcely diminished since the king's decision had been given out. Although she was nothing without the king, she had reigned too long not to have made for herself, under a king like Louis XV., a sort of royalty independent of the monarch. Louis XV. was unable to take from her at a blow, as Louis XIV. from Madame de Montespan, the power he had allowed her to assume; he could only have done it by laying hold of the reins of government himself with a firm hand; and this was an effort of which he was incapable. It was clear that the sceptre could never be taken from her decidedly by his hand, and that so long as her place was not filled by another person, there was no danger in treating her as a sovereign.

And yet in this same palace lived forgotten, almost unknown, a woman, a queen, whose retiring virtues formed a singular contrast to such glaring vices. What a strange destiny was that of the queens of France, under these two kings, so dissimilar almost in everything, yet so painfully alike in their excesses! History scarcely mentions them; the contemporary memoirs have more to say in six months of the king's mistress, than in twenty years of his wife. Scarcely have we witnessed the pomp of her marriage when she ceases to be spoken of;

her very existence is only recalled twenty-five or thirty years afterwards, by the obscure mention of her death. "This is the only grief she has ever caused me," says Louis XIV. Alas! was it indeed a grief? It made no change in the state; none even at Court. She had occupied no place; what void could she leave behind her?

The king extended this indifference to his daughters. The death of one of them, the Duchess of Parma, had affected him deeply, but as a warning to himself. He had not wept for his daughter; he had wept for himself in her. All of them had been from their birth the victims of this decided egotism. They were born at the time of Cardinal Fleury's great economy (1730-1735), and had been brought up in a convent in the country, where absurd indulgence and exaggerated severity* had spoiled their tempers. On their return to Versailles, the king did not require them to take a part in his amusements, but he had never thought of procuring others for them. The gardens of the château were their only walk. They were fond of flowers, and had them only in pots, on their windows, like the sempstresses at Paris. They seldom went out; and, thanks to the severity of etiquette, the common circumstances of life were quite unknown to them. When the youngest took the veil at the Convent of the Carmelites at St. Denis, she confessed that one of the things that appeared most trying to her in this new life, was the having to go down a narrow winding staircase.

Louis XV., like Louis XIV., had however always professed the greatest esteem for the mother of his children. He allowed her perfect liberty, which his predecessor had never done; when he had to appear with her in public, the most devoted husband could not have been more respectful. Beyond this, their divorce was complete; and this state of things had become so

* They were punished by being shut up in the vaults of the convent.

thoroughly the normal state at Court—so natural, so plain, that in discussing the probable results of a rupture with the reigning mistress, no one even dreamt that a reconciliation with the queen might be expected from it. The king himself had not appeared to think of it; and as the remembrance of the queen had had no share in his plans of amendment, so it was not one of the motives that would have made him persevere in it.

On seeing him exactly as usual, Madame de Pompadour had understood that she ought to be so likewise; and that the way of securing her return to favour, was not to seem to have thought herself forsaken. On the other hand, she ought not to appear as if she had felt no distress. But in this respect she had but to wait for what the king should say or do. She knew him so well that she could trace his impressions step by step, and never go beyond or fall short of his wishes.

"Come, Madam, come," said Richelieu, leading her in; "his Majesty complains of ennui; and as for me, I throw away my Latin* upon him."

"In that case, your Grace does not throw away much," she replied, as she bowed to the king; on which the king laughed loudly, glad that this diversion relieved him from the embarrassment of her entrance, for the old Duke's ignorance in classical matters had long been proverbial at Court; and his smallest notes, which were full of faults, continued to prove that he did not know French better than Latin. Yet he was a Member of the Academy. After having laughed twice over, the first time to show that he felt the point of the remark; the second, to prove that he was not displeased at it, he was discreetly making his retreat, and retiring towards the door—

"Stay, stay!" said both the Marchioness and the king,

* "Perdre son Latin"—to throw away time and labour. It is necessary to translate the French phrase literally here, on account of what follows.—*Trans.*

equally desirous that his presence should save them an explanation.

"If your Majesty commands me."

"Certainly"—and the king, with a readiness which was not habitual to him, drew forward two arm-chairs, motioning to the Duke to draw in a third, and to the Marchioness to sit down; then, as he seated himself—

"Eh!" said he; "what are we about?—a circle round a chimney where there is no fire!" It happened, indeed, by chance, that the arm-chairs formed a circle.

"Habit, Sire!"

"Yes, habit"—and he put his feet on the fender.

"Habit!" resumed he, as if speaking to himself; "habit! habit is a hard thing!—where we have warmed ourselves for six months, we come to warm ourselves still. We find ourselves in the very same places. Nothing is changed; only the fire is wanting." He sighed.

The allusion was becoming much too apparent. This time, instead of showing that he had understood, Richelieu did his best not to seem to understand. But the Marchioness could not restrain herself, and said in rather a sharp tone—

"Your Majesty is very philosophical."

"I!" said he quickly. "Were you listening to me? What was I saying? Bah! let us speak of something else. If there is no fire, let us do as if there was. Come—let me see—let us have one of those pleasant chats that no one knows so well as you how to set agoing." But she made no reply.

"Come, Marshal," resumed he; "tell the Marchioness something of what the old man of Ferney writes you. She doats on him, you know—of which I am terribly jealous. Show her his portrait drawn by himself."

"He has drawn his portrait here, Sire; and better, I should

think, than in a letter to his Grace. Read it. I received this to-day."

"The deuce, Madam!—A tragedy in five acts—a dedicatory epistle—and all this arrived, you say—?"

"This morning."

"What! whilst you was"—he stopped.

"Your Majesty would say, *in disgrace*."

"And he ventured"—

"But he is at Ferney, Sire, I think; and this book was sent off five or six days ago."

"Yes; you are right."

It was evident; but the king was not the less struck in spite of himself, that such a tribute should have reached her at such a moment. He was almost displeased that chance should have contributed to maintain his mistress in the exalted position of which he had endeavoured to deprive her. But suddenly passing from one thought to another—

"Ha! ha!" said he, rubbing his hands; "I should like to be at Ferney."

"Why, Sire?"

"To see how he will look; for there is certainly some letter on the road to inform him of what has happened here, and to say that his dedication"—

"Has been sent to a person who has no longer a right to receive it."

"That is what your Majesty intended to say, is it not?"

"How he will wish to run after it! how he will regret 'his spindles that he calls legs!'"

"His —?"

"Oh! nothing; only one of the pretty things in his epistle to Richelieu. Let us see this dedication."

She handed it to him, not without a feeling of pride. Voltaire was the dispenser of fame; he could do more with a few

lines than a king with treasures and titles. Had not a Pope* been proud and delighted to receive an honour similar to the one just bestowed on the Marchioness? Not but that she knew Voltaire was far from having only one feeling and one language respecting her. To all the charming verses that she received from him, she might have replied by citing the epigrams of which she knew him to be the author; and at the very moment that his homage took the elevated proportions of a formal dedication, who had not read what the same man said of her in the vile poem that the Parliament had just condemned to the flames?†

The king took the book, and read—

"'TANCRED, or, CHIVALRY: a Tragedy in Five Acts.

"'*To the Marchioness de Pompadour.*

"'MADAM,—All dedicatory epistles"—

But the king did not like reading himself. "Here, Richelieu," said he, "read me this."

"'MADAM,—All dedicatory epistles are not base flattery; all are not dictated by interest'"—

"Oh!" exclaimed the king, "what was that grant which I was made to sign last month? I think, if I remember right, it was to exempt his estate of Ferney from paying taxes."

It was true; and the dedication was connected with many other matters in which the author needed Madame de Pompadour's help. In particular, he had heard a rumour of a plot against his piece which was to be acted early in September, and consequently hastened to make sure of supporters. His correspondence of that period is full of the most curious confessions; but what is still more curious, is the frankness, we

* Benedict XIV., to whom he had dedicated his "Mahomet."

† "Telle plutôt cette heureuse grisette
Que la nature ainsi que l'art forma
Pour le sérail, ou bien pour l'Opéra."—*La Pucelle.* Edition of 1756.

had almost said the candour, with which he persuades himself that nothing could be more noble or disinterested than this epistle. "What do you think of my little Pompadourian epistle? Am I not very proud? Have we here a *Triste* of Ovid? Do I speak like an exile? Have I the meanness to ask for favours?" Thus it was that he wrote to his friend d'Argental. Far from imagining himself a solicitor, he fears that his pride may displease. "Madame de Pompadour must indeed be chicken-hearted," he writes a few days later, "to be afraid of my *proud* dedication." He did not comprehend that meanness is often the more complete when it assumes the most haughty language. The more we have taken the tone of one who asks for nothing, the more we have humbled ourselves, in reality, in the eyes of the person who knows that we are asking.

"Go on," said the king.

"'—— are not dictated by interested motives. I have watched the development of grace and talent in you from your childhood. I have at all times received marks of unvaried kindness from you. If any censor should disapprove of the homage I pay you, it could only be one whose heart was naturally ungrateful. I owe you much, Madam, and I am bound to acknowledge it. I will venture further; I will venture to thank you publicly for the benefits you have conferred on a great number of men of letters, great artists, and persons of merit in more than one department. The cabals are terrible, I know'"—

"Here it is," interrupted the king. "I wondered we had nothing as yet about his gout and his misfortunes. Have you read the *Ecossaise*, Marchioness?"

"No, Sire."

She told a falsehood. It was precisely through her that the authorization to act the piece had been obtained.

"Nor I," resumed the king; "but it seems that it is an

abominable pamphlet. If all that has been said against himself for thirty years past was to be brought together, there would not be one-half the coarse language with which he pursues Fréron from beginning to end of this piece; and yet here we have him crying out against cabals!—But proceed."

"'The cabals are terrible, I know. Men of letters will ever be calumniated as well as men in power; and I confess that my horror of cabals has decided me on living in retirement'"—

"Amusing hermitage, faith," interrupted the king again. "whither all Europe goes on pilgrimage, and where he writes the *Ecossaise!* He is laughing at you, Marchioness, as he laughed at you, Richelieu. Come, we shall see if he will not laugh a little at me, too.—Go on."

"'—— living in retirement, the only life which could make me happy. But I must allow, at the same time, that you have never listened to any of these petty factions; nor have I known either a man of letters, or any unprejudiced person, who did not do justice to your character, not only in public, but in private conversation, where people are more apt to blame than to praise. Believe me, Madam, there is some value in the suffrages of those capable of thinking.'"

"Good! very good! 'Capable of thinking!'—that is *grandiose*, another of the phrases of their jargon. Formerly, people thought; now, they are *capable of thinking*—they *learn to think*, like Lauraguais.—Do you know my adventure with him?"

"No, Sire."

"Tell it to her, Richelieu."

"M. de Lauraguais, newly arrived from England, came to Versailles yesterday. He did his best to gain the king's attention, and the king did his best to appear not to observe him"—

"Oh! you are embellishing, Richelieu."

"Is it not true, Sire?"

"Go on, go on."

"Well, by dint of stirring about, M. de Lauraguais forced the king at last to take notice of him. 'Ah! you are there, Count!' said his Majesty. 'Where do you come from?' 'From England, Sire.' 'What were you doing there?' 'Learning to think (*apprendre à penser*).'* '*Les chevaux sans doute*,' said the king, and turned his back upon him. The amusing part of the story is, that before turning philosopher, M. de Lauraguais was one of our great amateurs of horses. With the two meanings of the word *penser*"—

"What do you say, Richelieu?"

"The two meanings of the word *penser*"—

"The word *penser* has two meanings?"

"But, Sire, you yourself"—

"And how do you spell this word *penser* which has two meanings?"

"P E N S"—

"Bravo! Ha! ha! This is even better than my pun with the poor Count!—P E N—P E N."

"When your Majesty has done laughing, perhaps you will be so gracious as to tell me the cause of your mirth?"

"*L'homme pense*, my dear Duke," said the Marchioness; "*les chevaux on les panse*—with an A."

"Pooh! as if it was worth the trouble!"

"You think so?" said the king. "Well, it is true. A king of France who set about teaching spelling"—

"Louis the Great would not have done it."

"Because he did not know it himself, my dear Duke."

* In order to understand the point of this anecdote, it must be remembered that the two words *penser* and *panser*, pronounced in the same way, have very different meanings—*penser*, to think, and *panser*, to look after, or take care of a horse. Translated into English, the meaning is lost.—*Trans.*

"Nor did the brave knights of old, who signed their names with the pommel of their swords."

"No; but they were not of the Academy."

"Sire! Sire! I never saw you so malicious."

"Well, no more about it. Go on."

It was somewhat from affectation that Richelieu quarrelled with orthography. He pretended to consider it as something too citizen-like; he wished, although expressing himself well and writing pretty well, to belong, by one side at least, to the glorious ignoramuses of olden time. Thus he affected to mutilate common names, whilst he very well remembered the most complicated great names. For instance, he pretended that he never could get it into his head, whether the name of the Abbé Arnaud, albeit his colleague at the Academy, was Arnaud or Renaud.

He continued to read—

"'——Of all the arts that we cultivate in France, tragedy is one which deserves public attention the most, for it must be confessed that it is one in which the French have most distinguished themselves. Besides, it is only at the theatre that the nation assembles'"—

"Come," said the king, "it is not in jest indeed this time, that I interrupt you. It seems to me that these gentlemen, if they respect the orthography of words, begin strangely to alter their meaning. My subjects are *the citizens;* my people, *the people*, *the nation*—a something I know not what, that forms a body that thinks, that wills. Where is this body? Are we at Athens, perchance? So the nation assembles at the theatre! I confess I knew nothing about it. What, I beg to know, is the nation where there is a king?"

"That is what his Highness the Regent said one day to the English ambassador, Lord Stair."

"And what did Lord Stair reply?"

"'The nation! it is nothing—so long as a standard is not raised.'"

"Any standard raised in France would necessarily be that of rebellion."

"Unless you raised it yourself, Sire."

"And against whom, I beg to inquire? Henry III. tried to declare himself the head of the League, and the League overpowered Henry III. Were I so far to forget myself, or to do violence to my own feelings, as to put myself at the head of the crusade proclaimed in the present day, would my throne be the more firm, think you? No, no. While I reign, there must be no nation! and wo to those who would speak of it!"

"Shall I go on?" said Richelieu.

"No; enough."

He took the book from him, and threw it on the table. The spectre of the nation had terrified the king.

This spectre was indeed approaching with astonishing audacity at this period. The words *country* and *citizen*, so long thrown back upon ancient history, had reappeared on the horizon of modern society. They were beginning to proceed from every pen, sometimes in all their ancient grandeur, sometimes, and more commonly, mixed up strangely with the phrases of the day. It was not easy, to say the truth, especially since the times of Louis XIV., to understand them well,* or, above all, to use them correctly. The language of liberty is not learned from books; but by living where it is the language of the people. Again, even while living amongst those who speak it, it is often learned the wrong way. Those who went to England to study it a hundred years ago, were often

* Had they been well understood, who would have dared to use them? "The French," said Rousseau, "appropriate familiarly the name of citizen, because they have no real idea of what it means; otherwise, they would be guilty of high treason in using it."—Note to the *Contrat Social*.

the very people who made the worst use of it on their return to France. How many errors have not even those committed who spoke it the best, as Montesquieu and Rousseau! How many definitions have they given that are either too vague or too circumscribed! What inaccuracies did they fall into, from which even our most insignificant writers would be free! Even could they have ventured to speak out, much would not have been said clearly; when therefore they had to elude the censor's scissors, or the grasp of the king's officers, how much more likely were they to remain obscure! But the more the thing itself was concealed, the more prodigal people were of words; and beneath these words Louis XV. perceived the thing.

But he was not a man to dwell long on one idea, above all a disagreeable one.

"Suppose we go to supper?" said he.

"Willingly, Sire. But your Majesty must be satisfied with very little. I did not hope"—

It was untrue. Before coming, she had taken her chance, and ordered one of those choice little suppers with which she habitually regaled the king. But it was necessary not to seem to have reckoned too much upon him.

"No," said the king, not in your apartments—at least to-day. We shall sup here; Richelieu, go and order it."

"Leave it to me," resumed she; "I shall return in five minutes." And in five minutes, in fact, she returned; in five minutes more, the table was spread. Two confidential valets, intrusted with the arrangement of these suppers, covered it with little made dishes, which could scarcely have been prepared in less than a quarter of an hour. Indeed, a certain satirical smile was apparent on the king's lips, which the Marchioness watched with some anxiety. At length, under the irresistible influence of so many succulent odours, the smile changed into a laugh. He was decidedly himself again.

"Very good!" said he, sitting down, "very good! The fairy has resumed her wand—she has but to speak the word, and supper appears. Come, what shall we take?"

"A little of everything, Sire."

"I consent—a little of everything, Sit down, Richelieu."

"Your Majesty permits?"

"No, I command. Faith, there is nothing like a choice supper! Richelieu, some wine, if you please." And he ate and drank, laughed and talked, with the enjoyment of a schoolboy, and the sensuality of a friar. And midnight found him eating, drinking, laughing, and talking. And when Desmarêts arrived, as we have seen, he was still talking, laughing, eating, and drinking. A quarter of an hour later, the confessor might have met the Marchioness, whom Richelieu was attending back to her apartments. And finally, towards one o'clock, if his meditations had led him in the direction of the piece of water of the Swiss, he would have seen a man pass, wrapped in a cloak, still with Richelieu.—It was his Majesty going to the *Parc-aux-cerfs*.

CHAPTER XI.

Great had been the anxiety of the courtiers during the last few days. Without as yet forsaking the Marchioness, they were watching in great tribulation for the moment when it should be expedient to do so. They did not mean to commit themselves either with or for her. But the most anxious of all was our Abbé of Meaux. Others could at least wait to decide till events should point out the way; but *he* knew the very day and hour when he must decide whether he would or not. It was the Marchioness herself who had appointed him to the office of which he was about to perform the duties; what figure should he make in that pulpit to which she had opened the way for him, should she have fallen? And the sermon, besides? The simplest plan would have been to take another, without allusions, without compliments; in fact, a real sermon, in which he should keep aloof from all these miserable questions. But where could he seek such a sermon? Although he had a dozen ready, not one of them appeared to him worthy of his first appearance as Court preacher; and he could not bear the thought of relinquishing all the credit that he had expected from the one he had so studied, polished, and finished. Something, too, seemed to tell him that his patroness was not definitely fallen; that she was about to return to favour; and that by his being the first to hail the re-establishment of her power, in a public discourse, he would secure her gratitude for ever. But to effect this, the

revolution must be accomplished before Sunday; and by what means could it be hastened?

At the time of his adventure in the cathedral at Meaux, he knew nothing of what had happened. He had an appointment with his patroness for the following morning, at the little church where she came to confess. It was then only that he had received the information; not from her, for she did not come, but from the Countess de Rion, one of her confidants. He had set out immediately for Versailles: he had seen her, and it had only increased his anguish. Great was his joy, therefore, when, on returning to see her in the evening, he found that the king had sent for her. He instantly wrote to his uncle to inform him of his happiness, and request him not to fail to be at Versailles on Sunday.

The next morning, about eleven o'clock, he came into Madame de Pompadour's apartments in a state of the highest satisfaction. The lady was at her toilet; which, in our day, would signify that she was invisible; then, it was precisely the reverse—the hour of the toilet was the hour for receiving company, and this reception was quite general—whoever was not a stranger to the lady had a right to see her at that hour, and had even a right to bring a friend.

The dressing-room of a woman of fashion was a sort of temple, where people went, as Marivaux says, "to burn the incense of wit on the altar of the Graces." It was therefore the rendezvous of all who had, or thought they had, some tribute to lay on the altar. Round the divinity of the place, young noblemen, little abbés, and old beaux conversed and rattled *pêle-mêle*. Here, then, is the lady, seated before a small pier-glass, which is covered with gilding and lace, and supported by two panting Cupids, which Boucher, the great manufacturer of these articles, has imagined he could not make too fat or too chubby. Upon a table, the

legs of which are curved, incrusted with ivory, gold, and sometimes even pearls—a perfect repository of mother-of-pearl combs, silky brushes, and perfumes of all kinds and colours, is spread out to view; but from the large arm-chair down to the most insignificant footstool—from the table down to the smallest box, all is ungraceful from excess of magnificence—all is trifling from the efforts of art. The curtains are so heavy that they might be taken for carved wood; the carpets so thick, that you seemed to tread on a lawn.

Reclining coquettishly in her white satin *bergère*—her fan in her hand, her spaniel on her knee—the lady receives the homage of all who come in, without rising. If she listens, every one is silent to listen to the speaker to whom she vouchsafes this honour; if she speaks, there is a hush to attend to what she deigns to say. But generally she speaks very little; every one knows that she is witty—and, still better, that she is pretty—that is sufficient. Lively conversation is reserved for the evening; in the morning, she is motionless as a goddess, or laconic as an oracle. It lasts generally two hours, for the attendants have orders to protract their task so long as their mistress does not appear fatigued, and has enough of spectators. Let us not forget that all these spectators are men; no lady of quality would ever be publicly present at the toilet of another, unless it were that of a queen or a princess. It is a homage that only men can render, like every other duty of gallantry, without its being humiliating or derogatory.

However, the more this custom is removed from the manners of our day, the more we should be careful not to exaggerate to ourselves its singularity. The most respectable women complied with it; habit took from it all that shocks us most severely. Besides, it need scarcely be said, that the public toilet was confined to what could be done without

indecency; and although these voluptuous exhibitions no doubt contributed greatly to foster impure feelings, all was carried on, externally, with the most perfect propriety. An invariable etiquette settled what might or might not be done; certain scruples were even carried further than in our day—a lady's hair was dressed in the presence of thirty men, but never by a man; it would have been an unprecedented act of boldness and bad taste—in short, any jest, or allusion, or indiscreet glance would have condemned at once the ignorant or ill-mannered person guilty of it. The more hazardous the situation, the greater was the degree of caution observed. Every one felt, as it were, personally responsible that the modesty which the lady was on the verge of overstepping, should not be in the least infringed.

Of all the toilets of that period, Madame de Pompadour's was naturally the most thronged. Ladies attended it, as they would that of a princess, and with much more eagerness. There, artists and poets jostled great lords; there, great lords met with the king; and there, the king felt less ennui than anywhere else.

The great question that day was to know whether he would come or not. This public inauguration of a power which had been restored the evening before, was waited for with anxiety. The Marchioness knew from Richelieu, that the king had risen in low spirits, irresolute, dissatisfied with his evening; and that precisely because he had taken pleasure in it—because he was angry with himself that he could no longer be happy but at the expense of his conscience. She feared a sudden change of mind. Her eyes often wandered, in spite of herself, towards the door, which she hoped to see opened to admit the king; and she perceived, from time to time, more than one glance turned in the same direction.

The appearance of the Abbé de Narniers, who had often

been thought of, produced a sensation. The crowd opened before him; he came forward with a light heart, carrying his head high. Did he not see his patroness in the midst of a Court more brilliant and more numerous than ever? He observed, however, that she seemed anxious, and asked himself what could be the cause of it?

The Duke de Richelieu, the Prince de Condé, the Dukes of Coigny, de la Vallière, de Gesvres, and la Trémoïlle, some others, especially the Count de Lauraguais, and finally, several ladies, had formed a privileged circle around her, according to custom. This circle opened, to allow new-comers, as they arrived, to pay their respects to the lady; but if it was neither a man of high rank, nor one of her intimates, it closed again, unless the lady herself spoke to him and made him join the conversation. In the latter case, were it but a poor poet, he might remain till the very end amongst the gentlemen of the privileged circle. It would have been considered a want of respect to the Marchioness to have shown any disdain towards the person she deigned to notice. But the Abbé de Narniers was so completely her friend, that he did not need to be detained by her. Besides, was he not one of the heroes of the moment? He took his place, therefore, unceremoniously among the nearest; she inquired for his uncle, and the conversation was resumed. The conversation was not, however, so animated as usual. The preoccupations of the day were alike perceptible in the silence of some and the loquacity of others. Those who were generally witty, made violent efforts to be so; and wit, that flies from those who pursue it, had never been so scarce as on that day.

The dedication of *Tancred* had naturally formed the chief subject of discourse in the intimate circle. All the praises it contained, had been largely commented on; nor can we deny, that in the point of view taken by the author, there was

much to be said in favour of Madame de Pompadour; she was born an artist. Talent and grace, as he said, had been developed in her from her very childhood. Had she never approached the throne, she possessed talent enough to have secured for herself, wherever it might have been, an exalted position and a brilliant career. She sung, so as to excite the envy of the first opera singers; she drew, so as to charm the first connoisseurs—theory and practice, outline and detail, all were equally familiar to her. Although art and literature repaid with usury the patronage she afforded them, it would have been manifestly unjust to assert that her favour was a mere calculation; artists and poets could conscientiously praise her, as better qualified than any one else to appreciate their labours. She valued their praises, but she chose to deserve them; and, to do this, she had but to follow her natural tastes.

In this task, which we should consider both worthy and noble, could we forget under what title she fulfilled it, Madame de Pompadour was powerfully seconded by her brother, the young Marquis de Marigny. Like her, he had loved the fine arts from childhood. He had subsequently studied them, both as a man of taste and a man of application. At three-and-twenty, he had been appointed to the superintendence of the royal edifices, and he had so much talent and capability for the office, he executed it so nobly and regally, that his owing the appointment to his sister's influence was scarcely remarked.

It was for him that the privileged circle had to make room soon after the arrival of the abbé. He brought in a young man of his own age, small and slight, with a mild enough expression of countenance, but rather a military air.

"Madam," said he, as he presented him to the Marchioness, "here is M. Dorat, whom you allowed me to bring to you."

"He is welcome. I have heard of the success of your piece with great pleasure, M. Dorat"—

"Madam"—

"And this first success promises us, I hope, more than one. I have not yet read your"—the name had escaped her.

"*Zulisca*," said Marigny.

"—your Zulisca; but it is well spoken of"—

"Madam"—

"—Very well spoken of; and it appears that the public are of the same opinion as those who spoke to me on the subject."

She captivated Dorat as she had captivated so many others. How was it possible to resist such advances, made before five or six dukes, five or six great ladies, and from the summit of that throne at the foot of which all were prostrate!

"You write charming verses, I am told," resumed she.

"You are extremely indulgent, Madam."

"I am but just. I wish you to prove it to me yourself. When you have some specimens ready, come"—

"Specimens?" said Marigny. "All his verses are good specimens. I know nothing more finished, more polished"—

"Or more insipid," murmured Richelieu.

"In short, I keep to my invitation. Have you always written verses?"

"Always, Madam, even in the dust of a register office."

"And in the dust of camps," added Marigny.

"You have been in the army, then?"

"In the Rifles."

"And was it poetry that drove you out of it?"

"Other reasons, Madam."

"Come, Dorat, let us have your confession to the very end, unless you prefer my making it for you."

"You, Marquis! I should be curious"—

"Nothing but love could make a man leave the Rifles; so"—

"I see the conclusion you are coming to, but it is not the true one."

"What! it was not the bright eyes of"—

"An old aunt."

"In that case, it was for the sake of the bright eyes of her purse."

"No."

"Yes."

"She said that it was harder to secure one's salvation in the army than in any other profession; so she had no rest until I had quitted Mars"—

"For the Muses."

"But the worthy woman has not gained much by it. She considers the Muses full as heathenish as Mars."

This was another of the absurdities of the times. There was no medium between license and prudery. Louis Racine mourned over his father's tragedies. Gresset, author of the *Méchant*, had just published his *Lettre sur la Comédie*, in which he asked forgiveness of God and man for having written for the stage. It was always, all, or nothing. "As soon as they are brought to believe in God," said Duclos, "they believe in the baptism of bells."

"According to her, it is the devil that has caused the success of my piece," resumed Dorat.

"Sir, wit is a demon."

"A charming demon, Madam, when concealed beneath such features as yours."

"Good, Dorat, very good!" said Marigny. "There you have given the specimen; he is always equally happy, sister."

But all this and much more would have been required to restore her usual ease and vivacity to the Marchioness. Great

command over herself had been needful already, to keep up, as well as she could, these few minutes of conversation. The toilet was nearly at an end. The king had not come. Marigny alone laughed and talked; his sister no longer even listened to him. All at once her animation appeared restored; her eyes sparkled, she was seen to struggle against quite a different emotion. Marigny had bent down towards her, and two or three of the persons nearest to them had thought they heard, "He is coming."

In order to approach her without its being too much remarked, he had pretended to turn over some papers that were lying on the table, amongst the perfume bottles and china.

"What are you doing there?" said she, laughing. "My papers—my secrets—if you please"—

But he took up a handful, and ran away. He well knew that his sister was not a woman to leave papers upon her table that she would have been afraid might have been seen. Besides, it was often he who opened, before the usual visitors at the toilet, the letters of all kinds that never failed to arrive for that moment. At a glance he saw if there was anything worth reading; he commented, sometimes gravely, sometimes in the most playful manner, on the demands of these innumerable correspondents, or on their style. Useful or absurd projects, ridiculous or touching petitions, serious or trifling poetry, anonymous insults, or eulogies signed by the very greatest names—such was the tribute heaped up daily at the feet of a power known to be unlimited. Marigny had been reading for five minutes, and had not as yet opened his mouth.

"Well!" said the Marchioness; "do you keep it all to yourself?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "If we do not beat the

English in their island, it will not be for want of plans of descent upon them."

"Another?"

"Two more."

"We make, and they execute them," said Richelieu.

This was intended for the Marshal de Belle-Isle, minister of war, who had agitated all France, a year before, with preparations for a descent which had not even been attempted. The fabricators of schemes had never ceased from that time to improve upon the subject, and every day something new came to light. Meanwhile the English ploughed the coasts of the kingdom with their balls.

"What of the infernal machines?" asked the Marchioness.

"There are none to-day."

"Fortunately."

"But yesterday"—

"Oh! yes; something to blow up twenty ships of the line at once, according to the inventor."

"On condition that the twenty ships would allow themselves to be approached."

"Doubtless. The apparatus must always be hooked on, and that is what these gentlemen never think of."

"Ha! ha!" exclaimed Marigny; "here we have a man who at least does not dream of destroying his fellow-creatures. A new kind of food; healthy, abundant, easy to cultivate, that will keep for a year—the deuce!"

"Some concern of the poor," said Richelieu, with profound disdain.

"That would be worth something, your Grace," said Marigny; "but how can we believe such marvels?"

"What is it, then?" inquired his sister.

"A certain plant brought from Peru two centuries ago; it produces bulbs, a species of truffles."

"My dear Marquis," cried out the Duke de Gesvres, "do not bestow the name of *truffles* on these vile things. Have they so much as a name?"

"The author calls them *potatoes*."

"*Potatoes*! be it so. He had better have sent you a specimen, Madam, or a bunch of the flowers of the interesting plant."

The old Duke thought this a good jest. What would he have said if he had one day seen the king of France wearing a bunch of these same flowers? But Parmentier, the patron, the *inventor*, as he was called, of potatoes, was to have to struggle twenty years longer against the prejudices of the learned and the dislike of the ignorant. They gave full vent to their mirth. Marigny alone did not seem quite convinced that there was a madman in the case. As he opened another letter, astonishment and pity were depicted on his countenance. He brought a note to his sister without saying a word; it was written in blood. There was but one line and a name:—

"MADAM,—To-day, July 21, 1760, at noon, I complete my hundred thousand hours of suffering.—From my dungeon in the Bastile.—LATUDE."

She glanced at it carelessly. "It is at least the twentieth," said she. And the conversation was resumed.

He persisted. "A hundred thousand hours, sister!" But he could read in her eyes that it was in vain; and that there was no forgiveness for one who had offended her.

At length, he whom she had expected with such burning impatience, arrived. The king entered, as she had said in her letter to the Pope, "by the drawing-room," but the sound of the halberds of the Swiss guards was heard on the floor of the ante-chamber. It was, then, as king that he came. Nothing was wanting to complete the triumph of his mistress.

What had passed between him and Marigny, and how had the latter been able to say, "He is coming"?

Marigny had not lost sight of him all the morning. He feared, and not without cause, that the meditations of the night might have given him counsel; besides, counsel might be brought him at any moment, under the gown of Desmarêts. He therefore kept guard assiduously, both he and his friends, about the king's apartments. Although he would have preferred meeting him *by chance*, he was ready, should the opportunity be too long in coming, to go in straight to him; for no one, not even excepting Richelieu, had ever been such a favourite with Louis XV. When his sister brought him to Court, he was quite a youth, almost a child; but a child full of sparkling wit, and, joined to that, a candour and simplicity that had enchanted the king. Born in the humbler walks of life, he laughed at his own titles; he was amused with them, as with brilliant toys which could add nothing to his merits. When created Marquis de Marigny, after having been long Marquis de Vandières, "The fish-women," said he, "used to call me the Marquis d'Avant-Hier; now they will call me, the Marquis des Mariniers; of course, because I was born Poisson."* The king laughed, and the courtiers admired his being so little elated by a position so envied. They were all the more eager in their attentions to him. "If I do but let my handkerchief drop," he wrote to a friend, "at least twenty *blue ribbons*† contend for the honour of picking it up for me." As for the king, his feelings towards his young surveyor were almost those of gratitude. Had he not owed to him some of those moments of healthful and fresh enjoyment which belong to childhood or early youth, and which he had never himself experienced? The king had been heard to call him his little

* Poisson was the family name.

† The order of the Holy Ghost, conferred only on the first nobles of the kingdom.

brother; and the little brother, when he became a man, had retained all the privileges of a younger brother that was loved and spoiled.

We have no means of knowing how far, through his sister, he exercised an influence in the direction of affairs; but he had never appeared to wish to be, on his own account, anything else than the centre of the fine arts and the patron of artists. In spite of the favour he enjoyed, he was not a favonrite in the sense attached to this word under some kings more or less indolent. His credit rarely overstepped the limits of his office. If he did not satisfy everybody on the whole, no one excited less discontent. Of course, he could not be expected to have feelings which were not those of the times. When the most distinguished noblemen considered themselves honoured by being the friends of the king's mistress, why should he have blushed at being her brother? Consequently it gave him no kind of embarrassment or shame. Had he been brother to the queen, or one of the first princes of the blood, he could not have appeared more entirely at his ease.

Since morning, then, he had been on the watch. The king came out; it was the hour of the toilet, and Marigny had no doubt it was to go there. Great, then, was his dismay when he saw him take the staircase that led to the grand terrace, and from thence turn towards the gardens; but as it was at the same time the very best possible opportunity of meeting him by chance, he hastily took a cross avenue, and the king found him giving orders near a basin that was under repair; he had even in his hand, like a genuine architect, a long wooden ruler and a long roll of paper. With his back turned to the king, he appeared absorbed in his business. Two or three courtiers, who accompanied his Majesty, had just stopped a few paces off. A man—a shadow, had appeared here and there through the shrubberies; the courtiers had pointed him

out to each other, without saying a word. The king either had not seen him, or did not choose to see him.

"Good day, Marigny," said he.

"Good day—oh! I beg your pardon, Sire. Who could have thought it was your Majesty?"

"Always at work!"

"Your Majesty knows it is my greatest happiness."

"What are you going to do for me there? You spoke of pipes to be repaired."

"These tritons were decidedly ill placed. I have taken advantage of the opportunity to arrange them as I like. Are they not better so?"

"Perhaps. It is, however, very fortunate, at all events, that the château is heavier than a triton."

"Why so, Sire?"

"Because some day I should find it turned round."

"Have patience. If God grant us life—and money, we shall turn round many more for you."

"Here is something not merely turned round, but quite new, if I am not mistaken. What is there to be on these two stones?"

"Two vases, masterpieces, that Lemoyne and Bouchardon are making for me."

"You are very fond of this basin, then, that you mean to ruin me by embellishing it?"

"Fond of it? not more than of any other."

"You are fond of them all."

"Well—yes—your Majesty is right: I am particularly fond of this one."

"I understand you—she is very pretty indeed."

"Who?"

"That nymph of Coysevox, who is gazing at herself in the water."

"But she is in marble, Sire."

"Then why the predilection for this basin?"

"Because I fished up a poet here."

"O yes! you told it to me—Sedaine, was it not?"

"Precisely; Sedaine, the restorer of the comic opera, one of the glories of your reign, Sire, be jealous who will. It was here that I caught him pencilling verses, and that he confessed to me his purpose of forsaking the trowel for the pen."

"You encouraged him, I believe?"

"I took care not to do so. What would Boileau have said?—

'*Restez* plutôt maçon, si c'est votre métier,'

said I to him; but he pleaded his cause like Sophocles; he read me his first piece."

"Which was —?"

"*Le Diable à Quatre.*"

"Has he any other piece on the stocks?"

"Two, Sire."

"Their names are —?"

"One, *le Jardinier et son Seigneur;** Philidor is to compose the music. The other, *le Roi et le Fermier.*"†

"The music by —?"

"Monsigny, I think."

The king had resumed his walk; Marigny had put down his ruler, and accompanied him as he conversed. The shadow had again appeared at a turn in the avenue.

"What have you there?" said the king, pointing to the great roll of paper that Marigny had kept in his hand.

"A plan, Sire."

"For a basin?"

"No; a sewer that I mean to try and purify." Marigny unfolded his roll; the king glanced at it and laughed.

* Acted in 1761.

† Acted in 1762.

"Is that your sewer?"

"Yes, Sire; your good town of Paris, arranged, purified"—

"But what, in God's name, is all this? I hardly recognise Paris. Have you by any chance three hundred millions to advance to me, in order to pay for this turning of it upside down? Come, is Notre Dame left in its place?"

"Yes; but the outer court is doubled in extent. By throwing down some houses, I give to your cathedral, and at the same time to the Hôtel-Dieu, a commodious and almost handsome approach. Look here"—

"Let us sit down."

It was at the entrance of a shrubbery. The steps of a man were heard, as if retreating precipitately by an opposite entrance. They entered; Marigny spread out his map on a marble table, broke off a small branch, stripped it of its leaves, and remained standing beside the king, directing his wand over the paper. "Here," resumed he, "is the Palais de Justice, but no longer choked up in its old island. I throw down fifty houses; I lay out for you here, along the river, fronting the Châtelet, a charming walk."

"What is that spot in the middle?"

"A statue of the king."

"One more? I shall at last see no one but myself anywhere. They say that the Parisians have enough of me already; *that* one"—

"Is not for the Parisians, Sire. I intend that the gentlemen of the Parliament, when they go to the Palais de Justice, shall remember that there is a king in France, which they are apt to forget sometimes, as your Majesty knows. But let us proceed. These two magnificent straight lines"—

"Marigny, where will you get the money?"

"Ah! Sire, that is a question that Louis XIV. would never have asked."

"If he had sometimes asked it, I should not be obliged to ask it now."

"Well, I have foreseen everything. Soufflot has given me his estimate; he requires twenty years."

"Thirty, if he likes. That is what we can promise him the most easily."

"And only fifteen hundred thousand livres to spend a year."

"You are jesting, Marigny. What can be done with fifteen hundred thousand livres? I never built a fragment of wall that did not cost me three or four times the original estimate. Witness the repairing of this pipe, which is going to cost me, thanks to you, perhaps two thousand livres."

"Five thousand, Sire, the two vases included."

"You see!"

"I see that you will have expended, in order to employ two great artists, one half or one quarter of what you often give great lords for doing nothing, or doing mischief. But, Sire, let us say no more about that unfortunate basin; I will pay for it myself, if needful. But this is your capital; this is the great record in stone on which you have to engrave your name. For ten years past I have thought over this plan. What do I say, for ten years? When I was still a child, and could not have suspected that I should ever be called upon to occupy myself with these things, my imagination bounded at the thought of the wonders that might be made to rise out of the old chaos of Paris. 'If I had a king,' I said to myself, 'if I had a king to listen to me!' and here I am with a king—but a king who bargains—a king who could rebuild Paris, and who sets about it like a citizen of the Rue St. Denis to whom one might speak of repairing his house! The estimate is too low. If the expense was double—triple—yes, if it was fourfold; if Soufflot demanded, not thirty millions, but a hundred, a hundred and fifty, I say that you ought to accept his

proposals; and that the battle of Fontenoy would be sooner forgotten than the gift of a useful fountain that you will have bestowed on the poor inhabitants of a blind alley at Paris!"

His voice trembled; tears filled his eyes. His sister, his fears, the secret object for which he had sought this interview —all was forgotten. He had begun by acting a part, and in spite of himself his whole soul had been transfused into his words.

"Marigny," said the king, "you have a noble heart. If I had only had you near me twenty years ago! With one-half the money that I have laid out—Gods knows how!—you would have done great things for me. But I am old, I am worn out; and the state even more than myself. Everything alarms me. Go on, however, go on; let us see—take back your wand"—he had thrown it away. "You were speaking, I think, of those two lines."

"Yes, those two lines, Sire, are two streets such as there would be few or none in the universe. They start, as you see, from the Colonnade of the Louvre. One goes straight to the Arsenal, the other to the Bastile. They cut through, and throw down on their way, hundreds of houses; but it is in order to bring air, light, cleanliness, and life, into this vast labyrinth. Follow out the first. You are now beside the Hôtel de Ville; but the Hôtel de Ville is doubled. It reaches the quay; it shows a façade, in a parallel line with Notre-Dame, that Philibert Delorme would not have disowned. Now, return backwards a little. Look at that immense long square. It is the largest palace ever built by man. It is your Louvre encircling your Tuileries with its two gigantic arms. It is your Carrousel, for I consent to leave it that name, but cleared out, and such as it ought to have been a hundred years ago—such as I should have ordered it to be, if I were king, the very first day of my reign! In these im-

mense galleries I place the king's library, the museum, the collections of coins and of antiques. I lodge artists; I have exhibitions of painting, sculpture, industry, and I know not what beside. Oh! my sovereign, you will have room enough! and there will not be a work of art in Europe, or a beautiful thing in France, but may find place under your roof. Return to the quay. Do you see that bridge which unites the Louvre to the Mazarin Palace? Thence, in a straight line, you reach the Luxembourg. We are there; now turn to the left. You go up to St. Geneviève. The old church is no longer there; in its stead has risen one of the largest and loftiest churches of Paris. Three hundred and fifty feet long, two hundred and fifty wide, and a dome which might crush those of the Val de Grâce and the Invalides. Here it is—look." And Marigny rapidly unrolling another sheet of paper, spread it out before the eyes of the king.

"Look here, Sire, look here! There are twenty of these fine columns in the portico; they are nearly six feet in diameter, nearly sixty in height. Enter; here are other columns —more and more; they are less stupendous, but there are more than a hundred of them! Lift up your eyes—you are under the dome—your eye is lost in the vapoury expanse. Ascend; you are in the gallery that surrounds it. Ascend still; you are in the second cupola. Ascend still higher; you are above the dome—you are hovering over Paris, its steeples, towers, all are at your feet; and for many leagues round, this high crown that you have placed on the head of the old town of Paris may be seen; and the traveller will ask who has built this Colossus? and he will be answered, 'Louis XV.'"

"Build!" cried the king; "build, Marigny. Tell Soufflot to begin, to make haste; you shall have the money, but you must curtail one-half of the time. I must ascend your dome before I die. I must"—

"He will be answered," continued Marigny, as if speaking to himself, "he will be answered; 'Louis XV.' Yes, 'Louis XV.' But who inspired him with the idea of these undertakings which were to immortalize his name? who induced him to build the Ecole Militaire, that Louis XIV. might no longer have to be so proud of the Hôtel des Invalides? who taught him to appreciate all that is great and beautiful? who encouraged him?"—

"You, Marigny, I know it; you"—

Marigny pursued, but in a lower tone, and as if he had been alone—"In short, who first thought of all this magnificence? It was not his courtiers; it was not his ministers; it was not even he who brought the plans to him; it was a woman—a woman who was his good genius; and whom he sacrificed to the exactions of bigots!"

At this unexpected conclusion, the king raised his head abruptly. Astonishment, gratitude, anger, were mingled in his countenance. As for Marigny, he silently rolled up his papers.

"Are you going away?" said the king.

"If your Majesty will permit me."

"Where are you going?"

"To my sister."

"What to do?"

"To see if the courtiers are more constant than the king."

"Well! go, and wait for the king there."

"Is it true, Sire?"

"Go."

He was ashamed of his weakness, and concealed it, as he best could, by these laconic terms. But Marigny, who knew him thoroughly, was the more confident of victory that it was harshly announced to him. A gracious promise might have been but a feint; a fit of ill-humour proved that Louis XV. felt bound to keep his word. Marigny had but one appre-

hension. He thought of the shadow that had been seen flitting among the shrubberies. His joy was therefore great when his sentinels informed him that it had returned to the château. The shadow was Desmarêts; he too had endeavoured to meet the king by chance; he had lost the game a second time.

Having been informed in time by her brother, Madame de Pompadour did not allow any signs of surprise or joy to escape her. She only rose and received him as usual, with that courtly grace of which no one so thoroughly possessed the secret. She asked his permission, according to custom, to continue her toilet. This was the only distinction paid to a king or a prince of the blood at the toilet of a lady. He was supposed to appear there, not as a prince, but as a man, and to have no right to expect any homage from a person to whom he himself came to pay it.

The courtesy of the lady never went so far as to apologize for the undress in which he found her. It was not one of the least singularities of the times to see him before whom the magistrates of highest rank never appeared save invested with the insignia of office, seated in public before a lady whose hair was but half dressed.

There was at first a deep silence; but as soon as the king had exchanged a few insignificant words with her, conversation was resumed—custom permitted it; besides, it was necessary to avoid the appearance of listening to what they might say to each other. Usually, conversation remained general between the eight or ten courtiers of the intimate circle. The king took his part in it like any other person, but, when he was present, the Marchioness joined in it much more. It was to him that she addressed herself when speaking, unless she had occasion to reply directly to another interlocutor.

Marigny, however, still held in his hand the letter from the man of the hundred thousand hours.

"What were you reading there?" inquired the king.

"Nothing," said the Marchioness—"a petition."

She took it and threw it carelessly on the table.

"Let me see," said the king. "Oh! Latude!—a hundred thousand hours!—already? Yes; that is it—a hundred thousand hours make about—four thousand—four thousand two hundred days—eleven years, and something more."

The courtiers instantly admired the king's prompt calculation, but not a word of the prisoner. Latude had only two hundred and fifty thousand hours more to suffer.*

As we have said, the conversation had hitherto turned upon the celebrated dedication. As no one was aware of what had passed the evening before, or of the ill-humour into which certain passages had put the king, the subject was pursued, to the great annoyance of the only two witnesses of the scene in question. Richelieu wished to speak of something else; but the Count de Lauraguais, who happened to have the book in his hand, was not a man to let go such a subject; besides his love for Voltaire, he was one of the most zealous patrons of the drama in France. It was owing to him that spectators were no longer to be seen seated on the stage. He had devoted a considerable sum to indemnifying the actors for the suppression of these seats, for which a very high price was paid. The young nobility attached great importance to them, as to a privilege not to be touched, and it was only Voltaire who had brought them to consent to a sacrifice which the commonest good sense required.

"Really," said he, "I know nothing superior to this conclusion."

"What conclusion?" said the king.

"That of the dedication to the Marchioness."

"Indeed!"

* He was only released in 1784.

He understood from the tone of this *indeed!* that the work was not altogether to the taste of his Majesty; but it was too late to draw back.

"Does your Majesty know it?"

"Not the conclusion."

"Will your Majesty allow me to read it to you?"

"Read it."

"'Even in our provinces, magnificent theatres are erected, as formerly the circus was to be seen in all the Roman provinces; an incontestable proof of the taste that prevails amongst us, and of our resources even in the most difficult times. In vain several of our countrymen endeavour to proclaim our decline in every way. I am not of the opinion of those who, on leaving the theatre, say gaily at a luxurious supper, in the midst of pleasure and refinement, that all is lost.'"

"What!" said the king, with an apparent simplicity that he knew how to render very malicious; "are there indeed people in France who think that all is lost?"

Although he was known to be of the number himself, such a question, put point blank, might well disconcert a courtier.

"Sire!" stammered the Count; and his eyes wandered from the king to the book, as if to ask permission to go on. without answering.

"Ah! ha!" resumed the king; "'people who think that all is lost!'—But let us console ourselves. We have M. de Voltaire, who does us the favour to be of a different opinion."

The Count hastened to take these words as an order to continue his reading; he resumed—

"'I am very near a provincial town, as populous as modern Rome, and much more opulent, which supports forty thousand workmen, and which has just built the finest

hospital and the finest theatre in the kingdom. Candidly speaking, could all this exist, if our fields produced nothing but briars?'"

"The weathercock!" murmured the king.

"I beg your pardon, Sire!" said the Marchioness; "for the present he is an optimist, with quite as good reason, and as much sincerity, as he has when it suits him to cut us up, or when he writes to his king of Prussia. One day, because he has seen peasants in rags, he accuses us of sucking the blood of the people; another, because Lyons builds a theatre, and his pieces are acted there, behold! all is perfection in an admirable world."

"Listen, Sire, to the end. Here is something in the patriarchal style."

The Count felt the necessity of making his peace with the king, by laughing, in his turn, at some of the fancies of the patriarch. He went on; and the very same passage that all would have been eager to pronounce sublime, if only the king had appeared disposed to admire it, was listened to contemptuously. The reader himself affected a certain emphasis, which approached very near to parody.

"'I have chosen for my residence one of the least fertile parts of France. Nevertheless we want for nothing. The country is ornamented with houses that would formerly have been thought too handsome. The poor, who are willing to be employed, cease to be poor; this little province has become a fruitful garden. It is, doubtless, better to cultivate one's estate here, than to complain at Paris of the barrenness of one's estate'"—

"Come, come," interrupted the king; "that is not so bad. What do you mean, M. de Lauraguais, by spoiling that passage, after having read the other with such expression? Yes, yes; it would be infinitely better if every one cultivated

his estate instead of remaining at Paris, or—at Versailles—complaining that it is worth nothing. I suspect, however, or rather I am perfectly sure, that all your patriarch says there, is purely from a spirit of contradiction. If my nobility had a taste for living retired in the country, he would not lead the country gentleman's life himself, and would be the first to laugh at them. But at any rate, the advice is good."

"And your Majesty repeats it to us?" said Richelieu. "This is quite patriarchal, indeed. I confess, however, that I could scarcely imagine a"—

"A Richelieu, perhaps?"

"Well, say a Richelieu, planting his own cabbages. I ask forgiveness of the Marchioness for having ventured to name such a subject in her presence."

"Charlemagne sold his eggs."

"Oh, Sire! are we going back to the times when kings were shepherds?"

"To be serious, gentlemen; if each proprietor were to occupy himself a little more with the improvement of his estate, we should not be in our present position."

"Your Majesty forgets one point."

"Which?"

"That each one must occupy himself at the same time a little less in spending his revenue."

"Is it you who say so, Richelieu? very good; but you do not always say as much, if I am to believe a certain adventure."

"With my grandson, I wager!"

"Precisely. Is it a mere story?"

"Not at all; and I should be very sorry if it were. Only imagine, Madam, that last New Year's day I gave my grandson fifty louis for his gift. Three months after, I went to see

him at school, and in the course of conversation asked him what he had done with the money. Upon this the rogue, assuming a triumphant air, opens his wardrobe, and lays down in my lap—what? My fifty louis. He had not even touched them; he had not even opened the purse. Without saying a word, I opened the window, threw the purse to a sweeper in the street, and cried out to him—'Here, my lad! this is what the Count de Chinon gives you for a present!' Then, turning round to my Harpagon in embryo—'Learn this,' said I; 'that he who has the honour of bearing the name of Count de Chinon, and will one day bear the name of Duke de Richelieu, does not keep fifty louis for three months without touching them.'"

"That is a lesson," said the king; "that he may remember ten years hence, better than you like."

"Possibly."

"In truth, since you have wherewithal to be magnificent, be so; but for one bull who is fat without puffing himself up, though not, however, without feeding"—

Richelieu felt the touch. The king knew of his rapacity in the campaign in Hanover, and liked to remind him of it.

"For one bull, I say," continued Louis XV., "how many frogs that puff themselves out! My grandsire, Henry IV., used to laugh at those whose 'woods and mills,' as he said, 'were to be seen on their backs.' I know some people who would be glad enough to have their woods and mills still to spend. It is their châteaux—their lands, that I see on their backs in the shape of lace and embroidery. What are we coming to, gentlemen? what are we coming to?"

It was not the first time that the king had been heard to rally or criticize his nobility for their prodigality; but as he was, after all, the most prodigal, as well as the most involved of all the gentlemen of France, it was but natural that his

remarks should produce little effect. We shall have to revert to the anomalies of this state of things.

An effort was made to keep up gaily this conversation, which the king had begun with a seriousness that did not exclude pleasantry; but the serious tone was this time decidedly uppermost in his mind. Despite of all efforts, he remained thoughtful and absent. He had been brought, though while jesting, to the verge of one of those gulfs into which he felt that his kingdom was rolling. His impressions of the evening before, and of the morning, mingled vaguely with those of this alarming prospect. Melancholy was with him at the root of everything. He did not seek it, but it seemed to pursue him.

The toilet being over, he rose, took leave of the Marchioness, and returned to his apartments.

CHAPTER XII.

Madame de Pompadour allowed every one to retire but her brother and the abbé. The king had come; that was a great point. But he had just gone away in a frame of mind that the Marchioness had always dreaded. She only reigned by diverting his mind from all serious thought; what could she expect if he would no longer be diverted?

It was therefore somewhat mournfully that she went over the events of the week with her brother and the Abbé de Narniers. After many reflections, more or less encouraging or disquieting—

"I have thought much," said she to the abbé, "of your sermon of to-morrow; have you committed it to memory such as you showed it to me?"

"Yes, Madam."

"It is somewhat bold. If the king had not come to-day to my toilet, it must have been set aside."

The abbé trembled to think on what a thread it had hung.

"And even now," continued she, "I do not know whether some passages may not appear too strong."

The abbé again trembled, for he had made several even stronger than she imagined. What he had read to his patroness some weeks before, was much less scandalous than what Bridaine had heard at Meaux; he feared lest she should require a complete revision.

"Suppose we were to read it over once more together?" resumed she.

"I should be afraid—of fatiguing you. Trust me"—

"Till we meet to-morrow, then. But do not be uneasy if you should not see me in the chapel."

"What! you do not intend to come?"

"I am not decided. It will perhaps be better, even in your interest, that I should not be there; the king will be more at his ease."

"You will act for the best. Farewell, Madam!"

"Farewell!—future Bishop of Meaux."

"Oh, Madam!"

"Farewell, future Archbishop of—let me see—of what shall it be?"

"Madam"—

"Is it not true, Marigny, that a Cardinal's hat would suit him admirably?" And after having reminded him delicately and playfully of what she could do for him if she continued sovereign,* she held out a hand which the poor abbé kissed with respectful transport.

The next day, Sunday, the chapel was crowded. We have described the king's chapel elsewhere.† Such as we have seen it in 1675, such we shall see it in 1760; and although Louis XV. was far from being *adored* there, as his predecessor had been, still, however, it was the king, and the king more than anything else, that people went to seek at the king's chapel. As in the time of Louis XIV., those who preferred serious devotions went elsewhere to perform them.

The events of the week, the first appearance of a new preacher, the general expectation of a sermon for the occasion, all contributed to fill Versailles. Paris and the châteaux

* She had just obtained a Cardinal's hat for one of her protégés, the Abbé de Bernis.

† A Sermon under Louis XIV.

round had sent their full contingent of courtiers. Every one who had a right to appear there had been at the king's levee. It had been observed that he had, even more than usual, an air of ennui; it was apparent that this throng annoyed him. The levee was short. All those whose offices did not retain them about the king's person, went immediately to the chapel.

There were already a great number of ladies there. News and comments were circulating as usual with great rapidity. The queen, her two daughters, and the Dauphiness, had set out for Paris; they were gone to perform their devotions at the Convent of the Sacré-Cœur. Although it was not the first time, people did not fail to attribute their departure to circumstances, and they were probably right. The Dauphin had been at Sens for some days past. He liked the quiet of that town; he desired to be buried there; he was afraid, even for his very ashes, of the vices that slept at St. Denis.

Louis XV., on his side, was afraid of the virtues of his family. In vain did the Dauphin go to Sens, and the queen to Paris; what was their whole life but a perpetual reproach to him for the vices of his own? It was in vain that they avoided communicating in public; it was well known that they did communicate, and that the communion was interdicted to the king. However, as appearances are always something—above all, at Court, Louis XV. was more at his ease when he knew they were at a distance from him, and never complained of these absences. Of two affronts, he willingly resigned himself to choose the least.

Besides, he did not like his son, and had never liked him. No kind of sympathy could be brought about between them; there was as great a difference in their feelings as in their morals. The piety of the Dauphin, though mild in its character, was often carried to extremes. He took no part in politics, and even abstained from speaking on the subject;

but he was known to think on it not the less. He was on bad terms with the king's friends; principally with Richelieu, with the Duke de Choiseul, and, above all, with the Marchioness, who might expect to be sent from Court, or even put into confinement, whenever he became king. What a gesture he had allowed to escape him, when he embraced her, as etiquette required, the day that she took her rank as Duchess! But that which the king could least of all forgive him, though hardly aware of it himself, was his being his successor. He did not like to have before his eyes one who would gain by his death; he imagined this calculation to be always present to his son's mind. Thus, whenever he was asked to grant a favour to one of his son's friends, "Let him wait," he would reply.

We have told what he was to his daughters. He had, however, laid upon himself the obligation of seeing them every day; but we know, from the Memoirs of Madame Campan, their reader, how he discharged the duty. "Every morning," says she, "he came down by a back staircase to Madame Adelaide's apartments; she rang her bell immediately, which informed Madame Victoire of the king's visit; and Madame Victoire, as she rose to go to her sister's room, rang for Madame Sophie, who in her turn rang for Madame Louise; the latter, who was deformed and very little, had to pass through several rooms, running as fast as she could; and often, notwithstanding her haste, she had only time to embrace her father, who was setting out to hunt."

"Every evening at six o'clock," pursues Madame Campan, "the princesses interrupted my reading, to go to Louis XV.'s apartments. This visit was called the king's *débotter*, and was accompanied with a sort of etiquette. The princesses put on an enormous hoop, which supported a skirt of gold brocade, or some embroidered material. They tied a long train round

their waists, and concealed the complete undress of the rest of their costume by a large black silk mantle that covered them up to the throat. Gentlemen in waiting, ladies, pages, ushers bearing great torches, accompanied them to the king. In an instant, the whole palace, usually so solitary, was in motion. The king kissed each princess on the forehead; and the visit was so short, that the reading which had been interrupted, was often resumed in a quarter of an hour. The princesses returned to their apartments, unfastened the strings of their skirts and trains, resumed their tapestry, and I my reading."

Finally, as for the princes of the blood, other reasons alienated him from them; or, at least, prevented their being to him a second family. He had been very intimate with the Prince de Conti; but the liberalism of that prince had changed their friendship into coolness. The Prince de Condé was one of the courtiers of the favourite; but he was only five-and-twenty, and could not be the friend of Louis XV. The Count d'Eu and the Duke de Penthièvre, sole descendants of the Duke de Maine and the Count de Toulouse, kept quite aloof. As for the Duke of Orleans, he was another heir to the throne. He was in favour at Court, on good terms with the favourite; but the nearer he was to the throne, the more the king feared that he might come nearer still. In general, Louis XV. did not like to see himself surrounded by people who were not dependent upon him for their position and rights. He wished to be king, but without any trouble; and he dreaded having to sustain the character amongst those whom birth had made almost his equals.

A very ancient custom, formally sanctioned under Louis XIV., had fixed the moment of the king's going to mass, as that in which he approached without any previous formalities. It had been intended that, when about to humble himself

before God, his fellow-men should be permitted to see him as his brethren; to speak to him as to a simple mortal, and see him without ceremony. Besides, the chief reason was, that people would be obliged to be brief; and that the king, pressed, would always have an excuse for being in a hurry himself.

It was not in reality an audience. The king passed slowly through one of the galleries of the château, attended by the captain of his guard, and some of his gentlemen in waiting. The petitioner had to wait till he passed. He never sat down to listen—very often he walked on; the petitioner was then permitted to walk by his side, and continue to speak to him, but only till another presented himself. In that case, the king stopped, and the former hastened to move off. If there happened to be too many at a time, he expressed, by a word or a sign, his regret at not being able to hear them all; and those thus dismissed, had no resource but to return another day.

On Sunday there were seldom petitioners; but a number of spectators formed a line on each side of the king's passage. He was accustomed, on that day, to receive the salutations, more or less awkward, of the worthy citizens, who came to show the Court to their ladies. This kind of review amused him. He continued it at his dinner, which was likewise in public on Sunday. As he excelled in taking off the top of an egg shell at one stroke of the back of a fork, he never failed to eat boiled eggs at his public dinner, and was almost flattered by the admiration of the Cockneys of Paris at this pitiful dexterity.

Their numbers, however, diminished from year to year. The citizens, without hating the Jesuits, were on the side of the Parliament; without as yet going the length of hating the king, they began decidedly to look sulkily upon him.

Had they not hummed in their back-shops more than one of the half-seditious couplets on the exile of M. de Chauvelin? As to the questions at issue between the magistracy and the crown, they owned that they understood very little about the matter. But they trusted in *those gentlemen;* and when *those gentlemen* said, No, the citizens thought themselves obliged to draw down their hats upon their ears, and to repeat, "No." Therefore they did not care so much as formerly to go to Versailles, and see the august lips that said, or that were made to say, in answer to the *no* of the Parliament, "Take those people for me to Mont St. Michel."

Louis XV. had reached the middle of the gallery, when two arms were stretched out towards him; two men presented him, one a letter, the other a sealed paper. On recognising each other—for they did not appear to have seen each other up to that moment—these two men seemed equally surprised. When the king had passed on, taking with him the two petitions, they were seen to accost each other with some eagerness.

"A third meeting!" said one of them.

"You see clearly," said the other, "that a rendezvous would have been superfluous."

"But here—at Versailles! You!"

"Do you think I am more in danger than at Nîmes?"

"And if you were discovered!"

"Do not say, *if.* The petition that I have just given the king"—

"Well?"

"It is signed"—

"Fly, then, in God's name, before he casts his eyes upon it!"

"Fly? If I came here with the intention of flying, I had but to have stayed away. Besides, I ask for an audience

with the king. He can have me when he will. Are you coming to the chapel?"

"Yes; but are you going there?"

"I am. Is it not to-day that we are to hear our abbé?"

"Doubtless; but the mass?"

"I shall hear it."

"Shall you kneel?"

"God forbid! But I shall not be seen."

"Where shall you be, then?"

"In a private seat. And you?"

"Where I can."

Rabaut found a man at the entrance to the chapel, who appeared to be waiting for him; he followed him into an adjoining passage, and Bridaine was lost in the crowd.

The king was seated, and mass was about to begin. The Duke de Richelieu had still in his hand the two petitions presented in the gallery; for the king, according to custom, after having held them for a moment, had given them to him. The Duke, as first lord in waiting, had the right to open all that was addressed to the king. This right, however, was not exercised by Richelieu very assiduously. Those petitions that were not backed by powerful recommendations, had often to wait long before he took the trouble of reading them; and still longer before he laid them before the king. As for the king, he cared very little what became of them, or what those who had presented them might think.

The two last mentioned might have shared the common fate, if Richelieu, casting his eyes by chance upon the envelope of one of them, had not seen these words, "To be read immediately." His first impulse was to seek out the bold and ill-mannered petitioner. He thrust the letter into his pocket; and, had a fire been at hand, we will not answer for it that he might not have immediately thrown the letter into it. He

changed his mind, however; this letter, thought he, might be important. He took it out again, and read it; and a great degree of embarrassment was visible on his countenance. He was seen to bend down towards the Duke de Gesvres, to say something to him, and to pass him the paper. The Duke, after having looked over it rapidly, returned it, pointing to the king. It appeared that his opinion was, to give it to him immediately; and accordingly, Richelieu, stretching his arm over the back of the king's seat, put it before him, open. All this had passed in two or three minutes, and mass was not yet begun. The king began to read, and made a sign to wait. An eager movement of curiosity, hardly restrained by his presence, ran through the whole chapel, even to the furthest extremities. All eyes were upon the king; and were only turned from him to interrogate those of the lord in waiting; but Richelieu was too near the king to be able to speak to any one, even in a whisper, so deep was the silence.

Facing the king, on the seat appropriated to the bishops, was an aged prelate, whose agitation was observed by his neighbours. People thought they remarked that Richelieu had just made a sign to him that it was a matter in which he was interested.

Meanwhile, the king was still reading. He had reached the end of the letter rapidly; then he had begun it again, but slowly. He was seen to stop at certain passages, with an expression of surprise and embarrassment. At length, as if he had suddenly made up his mind, he folded the letter abruptly, put it into his pocket, and made a sign to begin mass. During the service, he appeared serious at one time, at another agitated. Toward the end, he appeared more calm; but Richelieu, during the performance of a grand movement by the orchestra, had conversed with the Duke de Gesvres, and some words of their conversation were already circulating from pew to pew.

There was no longer any doubt; this agitation had something to do with the sermon. Accordingly, mass being over, the king rose. In an instant, all were standing; and he went out, as he had come in, between his first lord in waiting and the captain of his guards.

On the stir that followed his departure, a man might have been seen in the vestry, where he had been seated up to that time, running to the door, but without opening it, listening—listening again, in the most violent agitation. This man was the Abbé de Narniers. He had heard the last chant of the mass, and was only waiting for the beadle to take him to the pulpit. What was all this noise? He could not make it out; except one circumstance, which he dreaded to realize—that was, that the king was gone out; for it could not be supposed that such a noise was taking place in his presence. His uncertainty did not last long. The Bishop of Meaux arrived, quite overpowered.

"All is lost!" said he; and sank into the arm-chair that the abbé had just quitted.

The abbé turned pale; his limbs sank under him; he had not even strength to ask for an explanation.

"All is lost," resumed the uncle; "the king received a letter during mass."

"From whom?"

"How do I know?—and he is just gone out."

"But it is an act of treachery; I shall be the laughing-stock of the Court."

"Do not give them time to talk—make haste."

"Make haste!—to do what?"

"To preach, of course."

"To preach!—I!—But if the king is not there, the sermon will have no meaning."

"You will alter it."

"In the state in which I am! I should break down at the first sentence."

"Good God! would you give in?"

"Listen to me: there is one resource left—that is, for you to run after the king."

"For me!"

"You; and if you love your nephew, you will do it. You will ask him how I have deserved such an affront, what I can have—but go, go; he will return."

"He will not return; and even if he were to return, how can you dream of such a thing?—I run after him! I bring him back! Then, indeed, both you and I might be laughed at."

"Time presses; the noise increases—will you save me, yes or no?"

"But"—

"Will you?—well, go to the king." The abbé no longer entreated—he commanded; and the poor uncle was accustomed to obey. He rushed into an outer passage with as much rapidity as his age allowed, ascended a staircase precipitately, and reached the great gallery half dead. But he did not regret the trouble he had taken; he perceived the king. The king was speaking to the Duke de Richelieu in the recess of a window. He was gesticulating rather earnestly, with the fatal letter in his hand; and without leaving M. de Narniers time to open his mouth, he gave it to him. It was as follows:—

"Sire,—A grand scandal is preparing. The sermon that your Majesty is about to hear is an apology for a guilty connexion which it may be your misfortune not to have the courage to break off, but of which I venture to hope that you do not intend that religion should be the accomplice.

"Since, then, a priest has been found forgetful enough of his duty thus to debase the Christian pulpit, it is for you,

Sire, to prevent the scandal being accomplished. Let your Majesty quit the chapel after mass; you will have given the preacher, your Court, and yourself, a lesson which, by God's help, may not be without its use.—BRIDAINE."

The bishop returned the paper, but without saying a word. This name completely crushed him.

"He is right, then?" said the king. "Did you know anything of this letter?"

"Of the letter, nothing; but Father Bridaine has heard my nephew's sermon."

"Heard it!—Where?"

"In my cathedral."

"Then the sermon has been preached before?"

"Oh! Sire, there was no one present. It was at night—by way of practice."

"Indeed!" The king smiled, the Marshal laughed; the bishop had completely lost all presence of mind.

"You see, Sire," said he, "it is an act of indiscretion—of treachery; and what right has a mere priest to address your Majesty?"

"Every one has a right to warn me of a snare laid for me," said the king. "This, with your leave, was one."

"But, Sire, in God's name, what will become of my nephew? 'I shall be the laughingstock of the Court,' were his words to me."

"Would you rather that I were?"

"Is there no hope, then?—none?"

"None; he is already aware of it, for I have just sent to tell him on no account to occupy the pulpit."

The bishop retired sorrowfully. As he approached the chapel, the sentinel on guard in the passage saw him stop suddenly, listen, and clasp his hands, with an expression of profound astonishment. A powerful and manly voice, which

did not in the least resemble that of his nephew, resounded beneath the vaulted roof; besides, there was no more noise or stir. The church might have been deserted, so freely did the voice range through it, so far did it vibrate through the courts and passages.

What had taken place? The bishop had hardly left the vestry, when his nephew the Colonel rushed thither, swearing, declaiming, and speaking of nothing short of cutting the throat of the author of the letter. His brother, cast down as he was, had been obliged to calm him. The Colonel, being quite unable to comprehend that the letter might have been written from conscientious motives, saw in it only a deadly affront to his brother, himself, and his family.

"But," said the abbé, to whom his brother's fury restored some self-command, "we have not read this letter; we do not know what it contains. No noise about it, then—at least till we know."

"Miserable priest!"

"What priest?"

"What priest? What! has it not come into your head that it must be your priest of the other day—your Father"—

"Bridaine! he write to the king!—Yes, indeed, who else should it be?—and my uncle does not return! The noise increases. My God, what a situation! what a furnace!—and it is Father Bridaine who—

"It is he, sir," said Bridaine, entering.

They were petrified; his look was not of those that can easily be faced.

"Sir," resumed he, "this is not the moment for explanations. You are expected in the pulpit. Will you occupy it?"

"No."

"Will you complete your own ruin, then?"

"I am resigned to it."

"Well; will you allow me to save you?"

"You?"

"Me.—Is your manuscript there?"

"Yes."

"Listen to me: I take it; I go up into the pulpit; I announce that you have been suddenly prevented preaching, and have given me your sermon; I read it, taking out what is bad, and arranging what is good. This is what I propose to you. Do you consent?"

"But"—

"Do you consent?"

"Do it, then."

"Quick—your surplice. Farewell;" and he was in the chapel before he had drawn on the second sleeve.

Then, only, the gentleman arrived (not a little embarrassed by the message he had to deliver) that the king had despatched to forbid the abbé to preach. Bridaine was already in the pulpit.

Few knew him by sight; but hardly had he entered the pulpit, when his name, pronounced by five or six persons, was soon repeated by five hundred. A murmur of curiosity, soon followed by the most profound silence, greeted his appearance in the place where the abbé had been expected.

"My brethren," said he, "the preacher of the day, being suddenly prevented from addressing you, has just put his discourse into my hands. I shall try to make up for his absence. Assist me with your attention, and may God Himself open our hearts to the instructions of His Word." He then made the usual sign of the cross, and, in that voice which seemed made for St. Paul's words, read the text so agreeably spoiled at Meaux, by the effeminate voice of the Abbé de Narniers:—"*Nihil aliud inter vos scire volui, nisi Christum et Christum crucifixum.*"

He began: all eyes and ears were turned towards him.

"Thus did St. Paul, the apostle whom God had chosen to carry to the heathen the example and the instructions of Christ, express himself."

It was the abbé's beginning, but without his pathos. The *great apostle* had become St. Paul; *Providence*, God; the *virtues* of Christ, His example; the *Christian legislator*, Jesus Christ; and so on. By these slight changes, he substituted the Christian for the philosopher, heart for talent, eloquence for prolixity. Just as in music, one note added, or better placed, is enough to give life where it was wanting; so in eloquence, a complete change in the spirit of a passage is often owing to a word, a syllable, the inflection of the voice.

But, as we may remember, there was more than one passage which nothing but a complete revision could change from the impious trash of the abbé into a Christian discourse. Bridaine was, then, more at his ease the more completely he set aside his guide; but as his memory had retained the general tenor of the sermon from the time he heard it at Meaux, he fell back with wonderful success into the ingenious plan from which he had deviated for a moment. This sermon, delivered by him, was an admirable mixture of order as to its arrangement, and freedom as to its development. He was unconsciously resolving one of the fundamental problems of eloquence, and was himself agreeably surprised, as he proceeded, at the value which the sermon acquired from his handling.

Hitherto he had thoroughly disdained all that savoured of art; but he was obliged to confess, that if art in itself is of little account, it is when cultivated by, and made subservient to, the emotions of the soul, all that is greatest within the range of human capacity. He comprehended that the true orator was neither himself, the man of impulse, nor the Court

preacher, the man of forms, but he who could unite and blend them into one.

The hearers never thought of theorizing on what they felt, nor had they time to do so; but the impression was only the more powerful. They felt themselves transported into a new world. The preachers at Versailles were not all Abbés de Narniers; but there was only one Bridaine in France. It was he who now spoke; he who was listened to again with delight by those that had heard him in other pulpits; himself, in short, but without his usual inequalities, without those defects which, at Versailles, might have diminished the effect of his eloquence. His success was therefore complete, and could but increase as he went on.

But there were three men who, though under the influence of very different emotions, listened to him with equal avidity. One was the Abbé de Narniers. The door had remained partly open, so that the accents of that powerful voice reached even to him. He was seated, motionless, his hands hanging down, like one who, by some extraordinary hallucination, was present at the dissection of his own body. The second was Rabaut. One of the Prince de Conti's officers had placed him in a high gallery, nearly opposite the orator. The third, whom no one knew to be in the chapel, was the king. He had heard what was taking place, and had gone up by a private staircase, to a seat where a curtain concealed him from all eyes.

The first words that he heard belonged precisely to the passage where the author had given himself so much trouble to bring about, under cover of St. Paul, the scandalous flattery that we have related. But under the rough hand of Bridaine, how did this false scaffolding fall to pieces! How easily did the praises of the master change into a satire on the servants! Instead of saying, with the abbé, that the king

was too great, too highly favoured, too much surrounded by magnificence and glory, to need that any one should devote himself to him, as St. Paul had done to Jesus Christ, the despised, the crucified:

"Truly," he had exclaimed, "this is a kind of devotedness nowhere more rare than among you, children of the Court, worshippers of credit and power! yet, were we to look only at outward forms, nowhere should it be more common or more complete. Yes! nowhere do men know better how to give all to their country, their friends, and their king. But in order to do so—and often they do not take pains to conceal it—the advantage to be reaped must be certain, immediate; they must know that all will be seen, valued, paid for; and if it were only to earthly things that this calculation were applied! —but no. In religion, as well as in everything else, the voice of self-interest must be heard; the wages must be paid. You attach no value to those fruits of salvation and peace which God ripens in the soul of the righteous; the slow but infallible recompence of true piety. If you serve God, it is for the sake of man. Your devotedness to God is only one of the innumerable forms of your devotedness to the world!"

Thus did Bridaine speak; but it was as yet the mere introduction to his irresistible theses. Only an eye-witness could judge of the effect produced, as he handled these thoughts again and again, and moulded them by his powerful touch, becoming more and more inexorable, till he at last reached the conclusion, so common apparently, but so alarming, and so little understood, in reality, that "no man can serve two masters;" and that if we would be the friends of the world, we must necessarily be the enemies of God. There is no spectacle on earth greater than that of the Christian orator driving a flock of human beings before him, narrowing, step by step, the space in which he allows them to move, and

shutting them in, breathless, between the law that condemns and the cross that saves them.

Up to that point, however, excepting the vehemence of language, and the striking character of detail, Bridaine had followed a beaten track. Any one else, possessing less zeal and energy, might have said the same thing. He had not reached the real centre of his subject, and he was aware of it. When St. Paul says that he would "know nothing but Christ, and Christ crucified," there is evidently more in the declaration than the mere idea of devotedness to Christ, as a powerful and good Master. It is the sinner who declares that he seeks his salvation in no other; it is human pride that abdicates, and casts down at the foot of the cross, its virtues, its knowledge, all the vain treasures of the old man, all the glory and merit of the flesh. It had therefore been in spite of himself, that the orator had kept with the author to the question of devotedness; but this subject, already enlarged by his eloquence and his faith, had another aspect, which was peculiarly congenial to his imagination and his heart.

The character of St. Paul, as the type of an apostle, had for forty years captivated his whole attention. That strong feeling of emulation that we have seen him experience at Meaux, on the tomb of Bossuet, had been fostered in him from his youth, by meditating on the life of St. Paul. The apostle to the Gentiles had become his ideal. Sometimes, it appeared to him, that by prayer, labours, and devotedness, he might at least follow him at no remote distance; sometimes he saw him, as it were, increase in greatness, in proportion to the efforts he made to attain to him. Then a holy despair took possession of his soul. He asked himself with bitterness, where would be the merit before God of labours such as his, unattended by danger? not but that he felt ready to face, if need be, persecution and death; but after all, he had not been put

to the test, and who, till then, can be sure of coming out conqueror? He dared not trust his own courage; he dared not prize a zeal which had only brought honour upon him. He felt himself for ever far below him, who could not speak a word without running the risk of being called upon to seal it with his blood.

Hence, whenever he had to speak of St. Paul, it was with emotion too deep and sincere, not to communicate itself to the minds of his hearers. Although, in general, he avoided bringing himself forward, he could not, on these occasions, conceal this peculiar experience of his own heart, even from the least observant. This mixture of enthusiasm and fear, courage and discouragement, presented, as he spoke, the most striking aspects. However disposed the hearers may be, and it is the case with the greater number, not to make a personal application of the conclusion of a sermon, when listening to him, they were irresistibly led to say: "If after forty years of labour he fears not to have done enough for his Master, how is it with us, gracious God! who have done so little!"

It was with such feelings, that, in conclusion, he traced the portrait of his apostle. He had gradually put aside the abbé's manuscript; for some moments past he had ceased to look at it. The attention of his audience was doubled. It was he, and he only, that they were about to hear.

We will not follow him through all the details of this eloquent conclusion. The further he proceeded, the more he seemed to forget the place, the occasion, the hearers, and even his subject. He might have been said to have been alone with God.

"I draw near," said he, "I lift up my eyes. The throne is set; the Judge is seated there, in His terrible majesty. 'What wilt thou, sinner?' 'Lord, it is not I who will; an invisible hand has impelled me towards Thy throne; a voice has said

to me; Go, and be judged.' 'What dost thou bring?'—'Lord, I have laboured, I have fought for Thy glory.' 'Where are thy wounds?'—'I have none.' 'What death hast thou faced?'—'None.' Then I perceive beside the throne all the martyrs who have died for the faith; and their Master casts a look of joy and love upon them—and I turn away and weep—and I say to myself, What right have I to receive a place amongst them?

"Yes," pursued Bridaine, "where are they, in this age of indifference, where are our martyrs? what blood has been shed? whose blood would flow if the axe of the early ages were to be sharpened once more? I ask in vain; I seek in vain."

Suddenly, it seemed as though some vision had dazzled his sight, and paralysed his tongue. "Oh! Bridaine! 'I seek in vain,' didst thou say? and there, opposite to thee, is a man, a missionary, an apostle, who has been familiar with death for twenty years past. Thou knowest that he has been a hundred times on the point of receiving that baptism of blood for which thou enviest St. Paul. But lo! thou hast made to thyself a heart after the fashion of thy Church. How can she call 'martyrs,' those that she herself puts to death?"

He had just perceived the minister; and the severity of the Romanist had melted beneath the glance of the Christian. At the moment that he had said, "I seek in vain," Rabaut, seeing his eyes all at once fixed upon him, had not been able to restrain a half smile; and this smile, in which pride, humility, reproach, and forgiveness, were all mingled, had pierced him to the very soul. He would have thrown himself, if he could, into the arms of the man whom his Church commanded him to curse. A glory seemed visibly to surround that head on which a price was set. "I seek in vain," he resumed slowly. "But no; let us leave it to God to distinguish

those who belong to Him, and who would, if needful, take the place of the ancient martyrs. Here perhaps, even here, there are those who would give up their lives for their faith—here perhaps—even here. Let us be silent! Their names are written above. The book will one day be opened to our everlasting shame, or to our everlasting glory."

CHAPTER XIII.

The day after the scene at Versailles, the Bishop of Meaux and his nephews were conversing in his study. Their conversation, as may be supposed, turned upon the events of the preceding day. The bishop and the abbé were quite out of spirits; the colonel consoled himself, as usual, by violent imprecations against everything that had contributed to his brother's misfortune,—against the missionary, against the king,—against God; though the Marquis was too much of an infidel to take the Supreme Being very seriously into consideration.

The abbé, notwithstanding his vices, had been unable to contend against a different feeling. He did not certainly go so far as to thank God for the lesson he had just received; but that lesson, in spite of himself, had borne some fruit in his mind. He perceived, though but indistinctly, a shallowness and want of reality in that eloquence which he had hitherto pursued; he comprehended how far he was from being a Christian orator. But as, on the other hand, he felt that he had neither faith enough for that character, nor sufficient ardour to try to attain it, he gave way, without a struggle, to complete discouragement.

The only person who might have revived a little hope in his mind, Madame de Pompadour, had refused to see him since the occurrence; and he knew her to have but little compassion for friends who were either unfortunate or injudi-

cious. He had been on the point of sending in his resignation as preacher to the king; nor would he have hesitated, had it not been for the entreaties of his uncle, and the violence of his brother.

And yet, beneath this violence, the Marquis experienced a feeling of a kind deeper than the powerless discouragement of the abbé. His more ardent mind had been more deeply shaken; the more he had hardened himself against it, the more he had been overcome. Yet the impression was not so powerful but that he could continue to struggle against it, at least outwardly. He was indignant at feeling himself accessible to other sentiments than those of blind anger. He would have blushed to show this to others; he did blush at perceiving it himself. But some good seed had fallen among the thorns and briars of his heart, which would spring up there more readily than in the barren sand of his brother's.

The bishop, a thorough courtier more than anything else, had only seen in the matter a check at Court. Bridaine's sermon had appeared to him excellent; but his nephew's appeared to him quite as fine. He repeated, after Boileau, "Tous les genres sont bons, hors le genre ennuyeux;" and as, in fact, the abbé's style was not *ennuyeux*, his uncle could not see why he should not have a right to preach as he chose.

"Come," repeated he, "come!—if it was a real fall, which I do not admit, who can prevent you from rising again in a month? The king will be there, I promise you; there will be a crowd—and you will rise higher than ever."

The abbé shook his head.

"And all this," cried his brother, "all this comes of Monsieur the abbé having taken a fancy to shut himself up one night in the cathedral! as if he could not have done as well in his own room, or in the chapel of the palace! What the devil had he to do in that"—

"'Dans cette galère!'" said the bishop; for he knew Molière, and rarely missed an opportunity of quoting him. "After all," resumed he, "it is more my fault than his. It was I who sent for Father Bridaine; it was I who brought that unfortunate sermon upon the *tapis*, here."

"No," said the abbé; "I had rather think that God ordered it."

The bishop looked at him with surprise; the Marquis burst into a laugh.

"So, then, we are going to turn Trappist—'God ordered it!' When do we take the cowl, brother Angelo? Poor sermon! it did not expect to effect such a wonderful conversion. Let no one say, after that, that this sermon is good for nothing!" And he laughed still louder, but like a man who strives to divert his mind from serious thought.

A person was announced, who wished to speak to the bishop immediately.

"Who is it?" said he.

"A gentleman, who would not give his name."

"Show him in."

"Oh! how do you do?" exclaimed the Marquis, rushing forward to meet the person that was introduced. "You here!—you, Diderot!—at the bishop's! Like the moon in a well, you fancy you see it, but it is not there. A ghost, a"—

"My dear fellow! if there is a ghost here, it can only be yours. I have just met, a quarter of an hour's distance from the town, a man, who was being taken to Paris to be hanged, as I was told; and, as was added, for having assassinated the Marquis de Narniers."

"Again! again!—that abominable business!" interrupted the bishop. "How is it, Henry, that you have not that man set at liberty?"

"Once taken, how could I? You know very well that there is a decree of the Parliament of Toulouse"—

"And you intend that decree to be executed?"

"Bah! we shall see. Well, Diderot, what good wind blows you here?"

"A storm!"

"Plague on it! I hope you have left it outside the door, at least?"

"Yes—and it will depend on his lordship whether it shall come in or not."

"Be seated, sir," said the prelate. "It is many years since I have had the pleasure of seeing you."

"Nearly twenty, my lord; and my visit of to-day is connected with our intercourse of that period."

The bishop did not appear much pleased at finding that his memory was so correct.

"My lord," resumed he, "you will allow me to come to the point at once. When I wrote your charges for you"—

"You wrote my uncle's charges?" interrupted the Marquis.

"Yes. Did not you know it? If so, I am very sorry to have said it; but"—

"To the point! to the point!" said the bishop.

"At the time, then, that I wrote for you, my lord, I wrote for others likewise; for my pen, as you know, has always been at the service of—all trades; a proof of which is a very grand advertisement that I wrote lately, for a new kind of oil to make hair grow"—

"To the point—to the point!"

Diderot could be concise when he liked, but he delighted to try people's patience, particularly that of the great. In fact, the story of the hair-oil was true; his style was marvellously suited for *puffs*, as we call them in our day, and he was applied to for every description of them.

"I am coming to it," resumed he. "Amongst my employers of that period, was a man of the name of Aubry, a priest of your diocese. I wrote sermons for him; he went to America and preached them there. So far, nothing could be better; but he has come back, and is going to publish them, it is said."

"Well?"

"With the author's name."

"The success will be certain—will be immense."

"Immense, if you like, but at my expense; which I am not of a mood to put up with."

"What can you do in the matter?"

"Nothing; but happily I know a person who can do something, and this person will, I hope"—

"Do you mean me?"

"Precisely; Aubry still belongs to your diocese."

"I do not even know where he is."

"That is of no consequence; he is at Paris."

"Well, what then?"

"What then? You will, I hope, prevent these sermons from being published."

"You ask in a tone"—

"Let us change it, if necessary. Will my lord have the extreme goodness to forbid the said Aubry"—

"Forbid! forbid!—he is at Paris, you say."

"Well, to have him forbidden."

"By M. de Beaumont? We are on such good terms!"

"You refuse, then?"

"But"—

"Very well. Farewell, my lord."

"Already?" said the Marquis; "do you not dine with us?"

"No; I have business on hand. As my devotional works

are going to be published, I am determined that at least the collection shall be complete."

"What do you say?" exclaimed the bishop.

"My lord promises me that I shall be in vogue; I mean to take advantage of it. So the collection shall have two parts; in one, my sermons; in the other, my charges."

"You don't mean to do it!"

"Why not?"

"It would be treachery!"

"Aubry's design is treachery; and you will not consent to put a stop to its execution."

"The sermons are his."

"Yes—

> 'The Abbé's sermons are not made
> By him—so says the town;
> But I, who know by him they 're paid,
> Maintain they are his own.'"

"If we reckon in that way, it is plain the charges are yours; but I have no time to look so closely into it. So, once for all, you refuse?"

"I do not say so—I will try."

"Try, then; but I warn you, that if you fail, the charges will see the light. Do not exclaim against it as indelicacy; a drowning man cannot choose the means of rescue. And I should consider myself as drowned—drowned in ridicule—if these sermons were published."

"Nothing binds these infidels," muttered the bishop.

"I beg pardon, my lord; I did not quite hear what you said?"

"Nothing."

"Yes, you said something—something like 'these infidels.'"

"Perhaps."

"And these infidels that nothing can bind are—?"

"I think you are better acquainted with them than I am."

"Well, since I am acquainted with them, shall I inform you who they are?"

"Let us hear."

"The infidels who are bound by no obligation, my lord, are not those who do not believe, but those who pretend to believe; those who live, speak, rule, fatten, persecute, in the name of an idea or a thing, which they would be the first to laugh at, if they dared. The infidels bound by no obligation are those. Listen to me." He sat down again in the arm-chair that he had just quitted.

"One day," resumed he, "in a town I shall not name, I entered a church by chance. Never did a grander sight meet my eyes; and if it was sufficient in order to be a Christian to admire music, perfumes, flowers, rich hangings, I swear to you that I was one for a full quarter of an hour. On the right of the altar, under a canopy of velvet and gold, sat a kind of god; a man so adorned, so surrounded by homage, that the temple seemed his own; and the altar, an altar raised to his glory. I saw him kneel, however; then, taking into his hands a golden sun, in the centre of which appeared something white, he raised it above his head. Every knee but mine was bent; every forehead"—

"We know very well what high mass is," said the bishop.

"Excuse him," said the Marquis; "he had doubtless never seen it before."

"Well," resumed he, "I will be brief. Do you know what was the conclusion that I came to, standing alone in my corner, in the midst of this pomp, of this sea of heads bowed to the earth? All this, thought I, music, incense, lights, splendid vestments, honours paid to the principal actor in the scene, all

this hangs upon—what? That a wafer is supposed to be flesh, and not bread. If he who offers it to the adoration of the worshippers believes firmly, sincerely, fully, in the reality of the fact, I have nothing to say to him; if he does not believe it, it is the most abominable farce that ever was acted in this world. Well, my lord, you who were on that throne, you who received all that homage, you that I saw present that wafer to the adoration of the people—for it was you—do you believe in transubstantiation?"

Diderot planted himself before the bishop, motionless, and arrogant as he could show himself, even when he was embarrassed, and as he could be to the highest degree when the embarrassment was that of others.

Terrified, astonished, the bishop stared at him.

"By what right," stammered he, "by what right do you come here—to"—

"By what right?" repeated the abbé.

"Oh! you likewise!" said the Encyclopædist; "come, Marquis, join the chorus. Ask me, too, by what right."

"By what right do you trouble my uncle's peace? As for me, I think that he has never seriously asked himself if he believes in transubstantiation; he saw that everybody believed or appeared to believe in it, and he did as others."

"What!" said the prelate, "have I not studied the question? have I not published"—

He stopped short. Diderot smiled.

"A charge, was it not? I remember, indeed, to have written one for you, in which the subject was discussed. It is true that you furnished the arguments; but since I, without believing a word of them, was able to develop them, I may be allowed to think you will grant me that others may have given them without believing in them a whit more. Come, my lord, conscientiously speaking—and endeavour to

suppose this time, that it is not the Encyclopædist, the infidel, the atheist, that speaks to you; but merely a man of plain good sense;—conscientiously speaking, I say, when you are there before the altar, the host in your hand, and three thousand persons on their knees before you, are you fully and perfectly convinced that you are presenting God to them? are you?"

"God is everywhere; why should He not be in the host?"

"Already you retreat a step! In that charge, if I remember, you made me quote certain decrees of the Council of Trent—there, you well know, the real presence of Christ is taught with desperate clearness; and every opinion tending to soften or to spiritualize this doctrine, is as much a heresy as the denial of it altogether. It is not I, it is the Council of Trent, it is your own charge, that repeat my question to you. Once more, my lord, that bread in which you cannot help seeing, after its consecration, the same colour, form, and taste as before—do you believe it to be metamorphosed into flesh? Do you believe that those words which you have pronounced, perhaps without any attention whatever, have the power of performing such a miracle? Do you believe that the wine, which has changed neither in taste nor appearance, is become blood? Are you persuaded that the body, formerly of the same size as yours or mine, is entire in that wafer—entire in every fragment of that wafer? Do you believe, in short, that this body is capable of existing, always entire, always the same, in a hundred thousand places at once? Say yes, and I shall be silent. Here, facing me, say yes, and I swear I shall believe you."

"But—once more"—

"I ask for *Yes* or *no*."

"*No?* Do you dare to think"—

"Well, then, say *yes*."

"Stop," said the abbé, "I entreat of you. My uncle is ready to faint."

In truth, the old man was in a state of frightful agitation. His face was red as fire; his lips and hands trembled.

Diderot rose. "Well, let us say no more about it," said he; and the abbé heard him add under his breath—"He did not say no; but he did not say yes."

This half avowal that an infidel had just brutally forced from the conscience of a bishop,—are there many priests who have not made it to themselves, in the secret of their own hearts?*

When Luther—at that time a fervent Romanist—travelled into Italy, nothing wounded him more deeply than to see priests laughing in secret at the miracle which they pretended to perform in public. "Bread thou art, and bread thou wilt remain!" said they ironically, in a low voice, at the very altar, instead of the sacramental words. Are there still such priests? Do all believe, in the nineteenth century, what so many did not believe in the sixteenth? We cannot tell; and we are not called upon to inquire. We cannot even approve that it should be said, as it has sometimes been, that a priest cannot believe in the mass; let us only say, and we shall be quite correct in affirming it, that it is necessarily more difficult for him than for others, because he is called upon to see more closely, to touch, to appreciate all the impossibilities accumulated in such a belief. And when he sees the importance that his Church has so imprudently attached to this pretended miracle, how can he be otherwise than alarmed at the smallest doubt? The whole of divine worship, and in some respects, the whole of religion, has come to be concentrated and summed up in the mass. As Christ is supposed to

* What follows is taken in part from our "History of the Council of Trent."

be incarnate in the host, so Christianity is, as it were, incarnate in the mass. Not that the Church has said so; but in her precepts, in her customs, in all she does or teaches, everything concurs to support this error. The mass, always and everywhere; the mass at every turn; the mass for every purpose. From Rome down to the merest hamlet, there is not a church, where the general arrangement or the details of the edifice,—where everything, in short, does not proclaim the mass, is not prepared for the mass, or does not set aside, at first sight, every other idea but that of the mass.

And all this, pomp, music, illuminations, fascinations without end, hangs, as Diderot said, on what? On the presumption that a wafer is flesh, and not bread; on a miracle of such a nature that those who are bound to teach it are precisely those who stand the greatest chance of not believing it.

The bishop had left the room. His nephews, after accompanying him to his own apartment, had returned. But Diderot was gone. He had left a note on the table, with these words only:—"There must be no sermons, or beware of the charges!"

"What a man!" said the abbé.

"You cut but a poor figure in the business," said his brother.

"Can any one reason with him?"

"Reason upon transubstantiation! I should like to see you try!"

"Why not?"

"Because it is one of those questions where to reason is to be beaten."

"You are as bad as he."

"And you no better than my uncle."

"Come, that may be called showing up the family failings. But, joking apart, do you know what I was most afraid of?

I trembled, lest, while he was speaking, he should cast his eyes by chance on this book."

"What is it?"

"You know very well; that 'Life of St. Tryphon,' by Father Boidard, that has just been reprinted with our uncle's approbation, or rather with mine, for it was I who gave it.

"Yes; I have some idea of it. But why were you afraid that he should see it?"

"Have you read it?"

"Are you laughing at me?"

"Well, my dear fellow, do read it, for it is enough to make you die with laughing. You will see how St. Tryphon had scarcely seen the light, when he pronounced the names of *Jesus* and *Mary* distinctly; how, at seven years old, his guardian angel appeared to him; how, at ten or twelve, when he prayed, the raptures of his soul held his body suspended at six inches, a foot, two feet, from the ground. You will learn there a new means of corresponding with heaven; you have but to write a letter to Jesus Christ or the Virgin, and put it, at night, in the wooden hand of your patron. Before next morning, the letter will have infallibly reached its destination. You may even expect a written answer, for St. Tryphon had several of these marvellous autographs. One day he was carrying bread to the poor; some ill-disposed persons accused him of having stolen it. He is about to justify himself. But God has provided for this emergency; the bread has changed into a nosegay of magnificent flowers, under his cloak. A hundred years after his death, he is disinterred, and is found fresh and rosy. Then begin, at his tomb, miracles without end; the dead are raised to life by dozens, the lame cured by hundreds, the sick by thousands; in short—but come, come, read the book, and you will see if I am telling you falsehoods."

"Oh! it is quite enough that the book does. But I believe you have a hundred copies there"—

"Two hundred."

"What are you going to do with them?"

"They are to be distributed to priests in the country, to convents"—

"Not to those of women, I should think."

"Why not?"

"Indeed? well, that will be excellent. You have not, then, read this adventure that I light upon by chance, on opening the book? Read it yourself. 'One day that the saint'"—

"I know, I know."

"But neither Diderot nor Crébillon* have ever written anything so coarse!"

"My dear fellow, you know nothing about the matter. Our devotees will be perfectly edified by it. The motive purifies everything."

"You know who you have to deal with, gentlemen."

"As well as if we had made them ourselves."

"Do not say *as if*. You have made them such as they are, and I do not congratulate you upon it."

"Happy the poor in spirit!"

"If they require such stuff as this to make them happy, egad! give them as much of it as they like; it cannot cost much to manufacture it. But since it is intended for the simple-minded, at least give the strong-minded leave to laugh at you."

"Do I refuse them leave?"

"Not you, it is true. Provided they do not laugh too loudly, and, above all, before the people whom you feed upon

* The son, author of several licentious romances; amongst others, "The Amours of Zéokinisul, King of the Kofirans."

these fine things, you allow them with all your heart to appreciate them at their just value; and if by chance this contempt is thrown back upon religion, it does not give you much concern, always of course provided appearances are kept up. As for you, it is easy enough to understand, since you believe nothing"—

"Oh!"

"Or very little; but explain to me how the more pious priests can likewise be the distributors of these absurdities. For, after all, if they believe more firmly than you do, the doctrines of Christianity and of the Church,—for instance, even that of the wafer changed into flesh, it is quite clear that they do not believe any more than you do. These stories of bread changed into flowers, of a man suspended in the air by the raptures of his soul, of letters come down from heaven, of these"—

"Has not St. Paul said that we ought to make ourselves '*all things to all men*'?"

"St. Paul, my dear fellow, from the little I know of him, was, above all, an honest man. I have heard you preach yourself upon his celebrated '*all things to all men.*' You explained it by showing how wise he was in winning souls by his kindness, his charity, his—I know not what besides! But you did not say, and you would, I think, have had some trouble in proving, that he ever made falsehood, even in the smallest item, a part of his system of winning them."

"Other times require other means."

"Are there, then, times when falsehood is allowable? Faith, brother, you make me act a strange part. I thought myself a great sinner, and here I am become the advocate of morality. I have often told lies, it is true; I have sworn vows in love and in other matters, that I never dreamt of keeping; and what is worse, I have felt little compunction

for these pranks. But to assert coolly, that it is allowable to lie, to call falsehood openly to the support of a religion that is supposed to be true, and the only true one—that is a thing of which I own that I feel I am incapable. I may have been a bad man, but I never could have been a priest."

The abbé laughed. To hear the Marquis talking morality, appeared to him highly entertaining; he did not go so far as to feel how hideous must be the system that disgusted such a man. What a cuirass is that with which Romanism covers the conscience of its followers! And in our times, this cuirass has but become harder and thicker. Books like the St. Tryphon of Meaux, if not worse, have been circulated for twenty years past, by tens and hundreds of thousands; and throughout the whole clergy, from the humblest priest to the Pope, not one voice has protested, not one heart has appeared indignant!

The Marquis ended by laughing too. He turned over the leaves of the book, and, from page to page, his eyes fell upon stories more and more burlesque. The levity of the libertine had smoothed down the indignation of the gentleman. The book now seemed nothing more than a fairy tale, and as such it amused him highly.

It was, however, with signs of disgust that he shut it, and threw it down on the table. As he had turned over the leaves backwards, he had just come to the Episcopal approbation. Amongst other encomiums, he had read in it:—"The attraction of the narrative, the interest of the episodes, the orthodoxy and piety of the reflections, guarantee to this work the excellent results that the author has had in view. We cannot, therefore, but recommend it to the perusal of the pious in our diocese."*

* It was very nearly in the same terms that the Archbishop of Paris recommended, in 1846, the "Life of St. Kotska," one of the most fabulous productions of Jesuitical literature.

At the start which he gave—"What is the matter now?" said the abbé.

"Nothing."

"You have quite a grudge at that poor Father Boidard. They say he is a saint."

"Yes, of course. A hundred years hence, his life will be written likewise. He will be paid back for the trouble he has taken for St. Tryphon. But what I have just seen is not his."

"The approbation? It is rather strong language, indeed; but the bookseller offered three hundred crowns, and"—

"Are those things paid for?"

"Of course. The bishop's recommendation secures the sale. Why should a share of the profits not come into the bishop's pocket?"

"Very good. But have not the reverend Fathers also their share? As authors"—

"Their share, indeed! They do not wait to have it given to them, I promise you. They take it themselves, and all the more because they appear not to care about it. With all their vows of poverty, they handle more money than we do; with all their vows of obedience, they are our masters."

"So much the worse for you."

"They are necessary to us."

"And if they are abolished?"

"What a childish fancy! Can they be abolished? The Parliament cannot do it, believe me, neither can the Pope. If the order is dissolved, the individuals remain; if the individuals die, the spirit remains, because this spirit is only, after all, the spirit of the Church. They are necessary to us, I tell you; they will always be necessary to us—they, or others like them. They are expensive troops, sometimes a little mutinous; but they never retreat. If you order them to do any-

thing that does not suit them, were you the Pope himself, they would find means to avoid doing it; but as to what is in conformity with their own views, you may be sure that neither obstacles, nor perils, nor anything on earth will prevent their accomplishing it. As for these miserable little books that are so useful to us with a certain class of people, we recommend them, but we would not write them. A Jesuit is ready to dip his pen in whatever you please; ink or blood, gall or mire, it little signifies to him. Nothing is too high, nothing too low, for them. Should you have anything to do with a peasant, despatch a Jesuit to him; or with a king, still a Jesuit; or the Pope, always a Jesuit."

"By the bye, speaking of the Pope and the Jesuits, how is that affair getting on of St.—what do you call him? St.—"

"Eucharion. But do not call him saint; his diploma is not yet signed."

"What delays! You have been soliciting for three or four years."

"Three or four years? The business had been begun for more than twenty when I took it up. It might have lasted for as many more, if not longer; but thanks to Father Pontcarlier"—

"Your agent at Rome, I believe?"

"Yes, our factotum, such as all bishops must have, if they wish to get anything at the Court of Rome without ruining themselves in expenses. It is through him that I get indulgences, dispensations, rosaries, and other articles that have been blest; it is through him that I obtained, for twenty-five livres, permission not to read my Breviary."*

"You might have taken it for less"—

"I had, in fact, taken it for a long time past; but I thought it better, after all, to conform to rules—it makes one

* See the Tarif (scale of prices) for 1845, published in several newspapers.

appear scrupulous. When Bossuet was at Court or at Paris, and his health obliged him to eat meat on fast-days, he never failed to ask permission of the priest of Versailles or of St. Roch. The more obedient you are yourself, the better you can direct others."

"That is well calculated. You were saying —?"

"That Father Pontcarlier has done wonders; but no money, no—saints. He has just sent me word that he has no more. He says that two or three hundred louis are still wanted."

"And you mean to send them to him?"

"They are on the road."

"Where did you get them?"

"From the funds of the diocese; but we are going to order a collection to be made, and they will soon be replaced.* You do not know what it is for a diocese to get a saint into its possession!"

"Was Eucharion of the diocese?"

"He lived in it, at least, for his name is by no means a French one. It was Gutgnad, which in German signifies Good-Grace. But St. Gutgnad would have sounded rather harsh; St. Bonne-Grace would have made people laugh, like that unfortunate Alacoque, whose cause has been commenced likewise.† Thanks to me, Gutgnad, like the learned men of the sixteenth century, has translated his name into Greek.

* Two collections of this kind have recently taken place in France—one at Toulouse, for the canonization of a young girl, Germaine Cousin, who died in 1601, the other at Marseilles, for that of a certain Benoît Labre, who died sixty years ago. "In order to obtain this object," said the Bishop of Marseilles, in his circular, "considerable expenses are necessary. The funds appropriated to this purpose are exhausted. I therefore make an appeal to the generosity of the pious in my diocese, that they may contribute, by their alms, to carry out an undertaking so interesting to France, the country which has given to the Church the holy personage whom it is our wish to place on our altars."

† It is still going on! In 1788, it was about to be concluded, thanks to the edifying exertions of the Bishop of Autun, who was none other, as is well known, than M. de Talleyrand. Then came the Revolution, and the saint was forgotten. Gradually the subject was again brought forward, and at the beginning of 1848, the affair was about to be taken up once more.

He has become Eucharion, which will sound very well, even in verse. The change, however, was not allowed to pass without some difficulty. It was under the name of Gutgnad that my man had obtained the first degree of beatification, the title of *venerable*. It was without precedent, said the doctors of the Congregation of Rites, that a saint should change his name in passing from the first to the other degrees. Money removed their scruples. 'Truly,' Pontcarlier wrote to me, 'with a few more ducats, we could have, if we wished, not only the name, but the person changed.' Nor would this be so astonishing as might be thought. I have found, in our old chronicles, traces of four or five Gutgnads that tradition, as it appears, has merged into one. Our future Eucharion is therefore, like the Hercules of the ancients, a certain being of the imagination, formed out of the quintessence of several others.* So much the worse for him; as for us, what do we care? Provided we have gone through the forms, and that the people worship"—

"*Worship?* I have heard you preach on the invocation of the saints, and you proved at great length that the Church does not enjoin that they should be worshipped, that it is a calumny to pretend it, that"—

"In fact, the Church does not enjoin it, and even heretics themselves do not pretend that she does; but we are obliged to suppose that they do pretend it, for, otherwise, what should we have to reply to them? We know as well as they, and better than they, that all these fine distinctions between *invocation* and *adoration* come to nothing in practice. It is evident that there are few people whose devotion to the saints is not in reality adoration; few, very few, incontestably, who go no farther than invoking them as intercessors, and do not in reality pray to them as they would to a god. But if it suits

* The case is the same with several of the most popular saints.

some people to do so, and if it is a useful restraint upon others, why should we trouble ourselves about it?"

"Very good; but what signifies, then, the reply to heretics, 'We do not enjoin the worship of the saints'? You do not enjoin it, no; but you place them upon the altar, knowing perfectly well that they will be worshipped there."

"My good brother, I did not know that you were such an excellent logician."

"My good brother, I did not believe you to be such a Jesuit."

"Well, you have come out with it at last. But, my dear fellow, who then is not a Jesuit in this world? And if there are people enough who are Jesuits in order to destroy souls, why should we not be Jesuits in order to save them?"

"You, indeed! You think of the salvation of souls? Is it for the salvation of souls that you are going to have Gutgnad canonized, the threefold or fourfold Gutgnad; Gutgnad, in short, who has never existed, since you yourself allow that he is a being made up of I know not how many monks? Which of them, I beg to ask, will the prayers reach?"

"People will pray; that is enough for them. They will pay; that is enough for us."

"Well, I may say, in my turn, you have come out with it at last. Why did you not begin by saying so?"

"Because I was relating a story to you, and I did not expect to have to do with a caviller."

"Well, finish your story, then."

"We reached without any fresh difficulty the second canonical step, the title of *blessed*. But the hardest part had yet to be done. It is the rule at Rome, that a saint shall have performed miracles, either during his lifetime, or after his death. The Congregation of Rites requires that these miracles should be proved; *proved*, you understand in what way; that

is, they may be perfectly false and absurd, provided the Pope's responsibility is in some measure covered; at the same time, it is the best means of making the cause last without appearing to desire anything else than religious conviction. Years have often been spent in seeking after the miracle wanted to complete the number; more than one candidate for beatification has been condemned to remain eternally *venerable* or *blessed* on account of having one too little.

"If this misfortune happens to ours, it will be from superfluity of riches. Four or five miracles suffice, and we have at least thirty, each more astounding than the other, all so prodigious that we dare not venture to cite them. Besides, where should we look for proofs? The chronicler has been awkward enough to put, *it is said*, here and there; after that, his testimony became unfortunately weak. Here it is that I admire Pontcarlier. In the first instance, setting aside the miracles that can be taken up at a future period, when the life of the new saint is written for the public, but which are decidedly so overcharged as to take away all credibility from the others, he has only produced five or six, and of the least extraordinary, such as the chronicler has considered that he could bring forward without hesitation. He has likewise brought to light, from other writers of the times, some few words that seem to support them; and out of all this, he has manufactured for us a memorial, to which, for form's sake, some little objections will be made, but which will carry the affair. Cardinal Braschi* sends my uncle word that all is going on for the best, *sano ma piano*, he says, which means that we may very likely have to wait another year or two —and in order to keep up our patience, the Pope has sent us some fragments"—

"Of the true cross?"

* Pope (Pius VI.) in 1775.

"Of the bones of St. Juventia, recently discovered at Rome, and who, it appears, is the fashion. A volume is going to be published of the miracles of all kinds that they have already performed."

"A splendid present, therefore!"

"There is a fragment of the skull, a finger, a rib, two teeth, and a few hairs."

"In fact, some parings. What can you make out of that?"

"You shall see."

"And this—Juventia was?"

"Between ourselves, I am afraid that she is but a baptized saint."

"Would you rather she was a Jewess, or a heathen?"

"You understand nothing about it. We call *baptized* saints, those to whom the Pope gives a name, because it has been impossible to find out their own. Do you understand now?"

"Yes, rather less than before. How can you know whether people whose names are unknown to you were saints or not?"

"It is known where the early Christians buried their martyrs; therefore it is to be presumed that all the bones found there"—

"I have it now; but you will think me more and more profane. Even if it were sure that these bones belonged to the martyrs, is it sure that all the martyrs were saints?"

"But, my dear fellow, you question me as if I had said at the outset that I considered all this very fine and very judicious. Once for all, I am telling you a story. If you are tired of it, say so."

"Well, tell your story."

"It is, therefore, the catacombs, the ancient burying-places that are resorted to, from time to time, to make a provision of saints. Formerly, only the tombs bearing certain emblems,

reputed to be those of martyrdom, were explored; but for some time past, people have ceased to be particular. The bones are taken and cleaned, and are then ready to be sent wherever it may be thought proper. Applications abound. Nothing, as you see, need prevent their being all satisfied; but the pious merchandise would soon lose its value. It is therefore by particular favour that we have received these few bones, baptized in a name which miracles have rendered famous. I was offered my choice between these fragments and a whole skeleton; the latter had no celebrity. I hesitated; the skeleton might become that of a great saint; but"—

"How? *become?*"

"Yes, such things have been seen. Once in possession of the bones, the story is put together; the Pope is quite satisfied to see what he has planted bear fruit. M. Basquiat de la House did a thing of the same kind. He had a small property in Gascony where he grew a poor wine that no one cared to purchase. Being at Rome, as Secretary to the Embassy, he had one of these bodies given to him, and christened it himself by a name venerated in the country. The peasants received it with great pomp. A festival was established; then a fair—and the bad wine sells."

"Very good; but it seems to me that the more taste I had for worshipping the saints and their relics, the more I should shudder at the thought of such mistakes."

"Not at all; you would do as others. My Juventia has been worshipped for two years past in Italy. Who has even thought of questioning the authenticity of her remains? The incredulous care too little about the matter to discuss it, and the credulous are too prejudiced to inquire into it—not but that there are, from time to time, revelations and discoveries which we would willingly be spared. Father Mabillon,

amongst others, has cited some inconceivable facts.* It seems that they did not even give themselves the trouble of reading correctly the inscriptions on the tombs that they explored. So that such a one, honoured as a martyr, was afterwards found to have died peaceably in his bed, and to have left, according to custom, and as the epitaph said, an inconsolable widow. Such another, *virgin* and martyr, a certain Argyrida, held in honour at Ravenna, turned out to have been interred by the hands of an inconsolable husband."

"And Juventia!" said the Marquis. "If the same thing were to happen to her?"

"Do not be afraid; things are not managed so carelessly now. There was no inscription whatever at the spot where her remains were found; only, in an adjacent wall, a stone, half-worn, bore marks of some letters, out of which they have made *Juventia*. Juventia, according to tradition, was a young Roman girl, whose heathen father tormented her to make her abjure Christianity. At length, he stabbed her to death. The story was too romantic to be lost; it was, therefore, boldly declared, that the remains found were those of this young girl, and the miracles soon followed. To be more secure, the inscription has disappeared; so Juventia is in full possession of her title and honours. More than twenty towns have some of her relics already; magnificent shrines have already received her smallest bones. As for me, I have done better still; I have imagined—but come, I must show it to you."

"Let us go."

"I warn you that you will see nothing but two teeth and the hair."

"But"—

"Go in."

* See his celebrated letter of "Eusèbe Romain à Théophile Français," upon the worship of unknown saints.

In the middle of a room, on a magnificent bed, in the Roman style, was laid a woman. From the door, her face, somewhat bent down towards the sides of the window, was not visible; but her hair was seen, falling in elegant disorder over a white neck and a velvet cushion. A white robe, bordered with purple, allowed a foot, an arm, and part of the bosom, to escape from beneath its folds. On the bosom, close to the heart, was a narrow but deep wound, from which fell some drops of blood. The robe was stained with it; and the bed underneath likewise appeared soiled.

"Well," said the abbé, "are you satisfied? This is, I think, such a relic as has seldom been seen."

The Marquis stood thunderstruck. "But," said he, "you are jesting with me. Do you think of putting that into a church?"

"Why not?"

"If the showman of a set of wax figures were to have one of the same kind made, he would be forbidden to show it."

"And it would be right. As for us, it is quite another thing. What do we intend, after all?—only to make the story of a martyrdom more captivating."

"An imaginary martyrdom!"

"Imaginary, perhaps, but what matters it?—the moral result will be produced."

"*Moral!*—indeed! And those in whose minds you will have awakened, by this interesting—victim—only feelings of"—

"Let them *confess!* But answer my question. Is not the idea, in itself, one of the most ingenious?"

"You see that I admire it."

"It is, however, an invention of Pontcarlier's. He has even spoken of it to Cardinal Braschi, who considered it ex-

cellent. God knows how many saints will now be made up in this way! With the smallest bone to insert"—

"What! the bones are there?"

"Of course. Do you not understand? The fragment of the skull is here, above the forehead; here is the hair. There are nine"—

"They are red!"

"Yes. I shall have them dyed, that they may correspond with the rest. This finger, ornamented by a ring, is the one in which we have put the finger bones."*

"That hand is admirably done."

"Is it not?"

"Where did you find a workman?"

"Again one of our reverend Fathers. They do a little of everything, as you know."

"I did not know before that they worked in wax."

"They cast cannon for the Emperor of China."

"True; and where is the rib?"

"There, under the wound; it is visible—look!"

"I think I see it; but of what colour is it?"

"It is painted red. It was necessary, since the wound is supposed to be quite fresh. As for the teeth, here they are—here, under the lower lip; come to this side, you will see them."

The Marquis went round the bed; but when he was in front of the face, he burst into a laugh, and began to clap his hands. "That is it!" cried he, "that is it! There never was a portrait more like."

"At last!" said the abbé; "you recognise it? it is very fortunate."

* Figures of the same kind are to be seen at the present time in many places. Not long ago (1844) one was carried in procession in the town of Provins, in France; and it was the present Bishop of Meaux, M. Allon, who led the ceremony. *Six hundred* priests accompanied one of the most voluptuous effigies that art, even Pagan art, ever executed.

"Did she consent to sit?"

"Yes; but she did not know why. I only told her afterwards."

"And then?"

"She called me impious, and an idolater."

"The truth is, that it is going rather far, to put the effigy of your mistress upon an altar in the cathedral of Meaux."

"My dear fellow, three quarters of the Italian Madonnas, that we vie with each other in copying, were the mistresses of the painters. Raphael had no more seen the Virgin than I have Juventia. If the Fornarina is worshipped in Italy, Madeleine may quite as well be worshipped in France."

"A heretic!"

"A Jupiter has become a St. Peter at Rome."

"Very good; but let us sum up the matter—a legend, some bones, a little wax to cover them; and it is before this that people are to be called to prostrate themselves! I confess I do not quite see in what our holy Church differs from Paganism in this particular. Between a divinity made out of such elements, and another honestly made out of nothing, where is the difference?"

"And where is the necessity for a difference? Christian or heathen, man is the same. For six thousand years past, he asks, as the Jews did of Aaron, for 'gods to go before him.' Well, here are gods! If we would be followed ourselves, we must appear at least to follow them. But what is the matter, that you look at me in such a way?"

In fact, the abbé remarked an expression of seriousness in the countenance of his brother that was not habitual to him. Notwithstanding a return of hilarity, as when he saw the face of the saint, he appeared thoughtful. The cynical coolness of the priest disgusted the profligate; the mind hardened by vice was roused to indignation by contact with another mind de-

graded by falsehood. Besides, it was the first time that he had sounded, with some attention, the ideas of the abbé on religion and religious worship. Hitherto, though he had not considered him a believer, he had been satisfied to see in him a man carrying out his profession; he had never imagined him coolly justifying to himself the frauds of which he might be the instrument.

These discoveries, therefore, produced a singular effect upon him. Had he been a nominal believer, it would perhaps have led him to infidelity; as an infidel, it did not make him a believer; but he began to feel that this could not be Christianity—that religion, in itself, could have nothing in common with this baseness—in a word, that perhaps he was in the wrong not to have sought to be better acquainted with it. The latter sentiment was, however, as yet too vague for him to venture to express it; above all, before a man so little fitted to understand him.

"Hitherto," said he, "I thought that I did not set a high value on mankind. Priests, it would seem, put a still lower estimate upon them."

"Because they know them better."

"Then why such fine discourses on the dignity of man, the excellence of his faculties, and of his nature?"

"Because high-sounding words are absolutely necessary to conceal the petty means employed. Two ways offer themselves to us; either to raise man to the level of Christianity, or to bring down Christianity to the level of man. The latter is the surest and shortest. We have taken it; and you see," added he, casting a look of complacency upon the future deity, "that we succeed pretty well."

"Let us say no more about it," said the Marquis. "We have had enough, and too much, of the image; what is the original doing?"

"The original is more unmanageable than ever. She has heard, I cannot tell how, of the arrest of her Bruyn. After having condemned him so strongly, she still loves him. As long as that man lives, it will be the same thing over and over again. Happily"—

"You are mistaken. That man shall not be put to death. The injustice of the case begins to weigh upon my mind."

"Do you mean to save him?"

"Yes."

"After having had him arrested a week ago?"

"Yes."

"You are losing your senses."

"Perhaps; but I am recovering my feelings."

CHAPTER XIV.

Whilst the scandals of his Church were thus preparing the Marquis to repent of his own faults, his victim, the unfortunate Cévenol, was sorrowfully bending his steps towards Paris, between two of the horse-patrol. At Meaux, nothing further had been done than to establish his identity, and he was sent, as having been condemned by the Parliament of Toulouse, to the prisons of the Parliament of Paris.

As he had not been able to prevail upon them to name the author of his arrest, he remained convinced that it was Father Bridaine. This thought weighed more heavily upon him than the remembrance of all his sufferings, or even the expectation of death. So much vileness beneath so much apparent compassion, so much dissimulation beneath such frankness of manner, appeared to him, not without reason, the last possible extremity of human wickedness.

When he found himself alone, in chains, on a little straw, in one of the damp dungeons of the Conciergerie, he was surprised at feeling himself more calm. This dungeon was, as it were, the harbour. This adventurous character experienced a sort of satisfaction in resigning himself without a struggle, even without regret, into the hands of relentless fate. But he was not formed to remain long in a state of quietude; his very tranquillity became the source of anguish to him.

In the perpetual necessity of falling back upon himself, he found himself inquiring, involuntarily, why he was so calm;

and he felt that it was less from resignation than indifference —less from submission than exhaustion. He was obliged to own that thoughts of God had very little share in the peace restored to him. Then came the bitter remembrance of his state of mind, and his peace in days gone by. What a contrast to those times when his life was a perpetual sacrifice—when God was his all—when his first and last feeling in all things was to seek and to find all in God! He was going to die; but rather endeavoured to harden himself against the terrors of death, than to soften these by divine hopes. He would sacrifice his life without regret; but it was no longer a sacrifice that could be agreeable to God. He felt that he ought, above all, to forgive him who had betrayed him; but he could not attain to this, and he dreaded to die with a feeling of hatred in his heart. Besides, he too had betrayed another. He had heard himself called *Judas*, and that voice still vibrated on his ear. If he did not obtain pardon—and where could he turn to seek it?—he would hear that voice even on the scaffold, even before the tribunal of God.

Two days after his arrival at Paris, he was seated at the same spot, motionless, cast down, and wearing out his feelings in this endless struggle, to which there seemed no issue, when a voice made him raise his head. His eyes suddenly kindled; his hands stiffened; the word *Judas*, that lay so heavily on his bosom, fell with a fearful smile from his lips, which were compressed with anger. The door had just opened, and the prisoner had recognised Bridaine.

"Well, my friend," said the priest—but he stopped short; he had not distinctly heard the Cévenol's exclamation; and it was only on coming close to him, in the portion of the dungeon where there was most light, that he had just perceived his face. "What!" resumed he, "what is the matter? do you not recognise me? It is I!"

The expression of Bruyn's countenance softened beneath the benevolent glance of the priest—a thought, a light had just crossed his mind. "If indeed it were not he!" cried he.

Bridaine at last understood. He was surprised at not having thought of the suspicions that the prisoner might have conceived. The less we have the intention of betraying another, the less do we seek to avoid all appearance of doing so. But he understood, at the same time, that he no longer needed to justify himself. He laid his hand on Bruyn's shoulder, smiled, and shook his head, whilst he repeated—"My poor friend!" then, without saying another word, he went and sat down opposite, on the stone bench that surrounded the cell.

"It was not you, God be praised!" resumed the Cévenol. "Who was it, then?" and all his anger gloomily returned. But without leaving time to the priest to answer, "No!" cried he; "No! I had rather not know! Unfortunate being that I am! I was just now lamenting that I had some one to curse at my dying hour; God has removed this weight from my mind; and was I going to ask for it back again? No!—do not answer me!"

"I should not have answered," said the missionary. "Be calm."

"But why leave me several days in an error which was torture to me? When I discovered your name"—

"My name! Do you know my name? Who has told it to you?"

"You forget the letter."

"What letter?"

"The bishop's letter that you left on the table."

"I understand now."

"You understand me. I saw that I was sold by him of whom I had just spoken (without recognising him), as of the only man in his Church whom I had trusted!"

"Listen to me. Since that time I have not lost sight of you. If you had not been brought here, I should have returned to Meaux to see you; but, before we go farther, answer me, yes or no—Have you committed the crime for which you are condemned?"

"No."

"God hears you!"

"I know it."

"Repeat again to me that you are innocent."

"I am; of this crime, at least."

"Well, finish your story."

"What! do you think you can save me?"

"Did I say so?"

"Will you try?"

"Perhaps."

"Oh! my God, my God!"

He burst into tears. The terrors of death seemed to have been brought back to him with the hopes of life; but he still struggled, and he was indignant at being so moved.

"Another humiliation!" murmured he.

"Proud thought!" said Bridaine, with severity. "Would you wish to remain unmoved, in presence of that which your Master and mine could not face without emotion? Would you wish it to be said that you had drunk, without flinching, that cup which He asked of God that it might pass from Him? But come, I asked you for the end of your story."

"I will endeavour to relate it. Where was I?"

"At the sermon at Nimes. You had just confessed to Father—to me. I had learned with indignation the manœuvres by which you had been made a Catholic. I had given you, not absolution—for you seemed unable to believe in it, but my blessing."

"Yes; I recollect. What good it did me! but I was not

worthy of it. My heart, like an accursed soil, long brought forth only fruits of shame and death.

"I had submitted to all that was required of me; I had lost myself in the eyes of my brethren by my abjuration, and was dishonoured in my own by the public profession of a religion that I despised.

"I expected my reward, but my reward did not come. It had been agreed that Madeleine should be restored to me, and every day brought fresh pretexts for putting it off. I was told that she was so happy in her convent that she would not leave it till the last moment, when all was ready for our union. My affection was irritated by these interminable delays. I began to suspect that the opposition did not proceed from her; I trembled lest some new act of baseness, which they did not yet venture to name to me, might be the price at which they had resolved to restore her to me.

"My apprehensions made me anticipate the overtures intended to be made to me at the first opportunity. I went to Father Charnay. I threw myself into a passion; but he was not a man to be displeased at insults which he was sure to turn to account. He listened quietly to the end, and when I cried out: 'What is expected of me? have I not done enough yet?' 'My dear son,' said he, 'we cannot do too much for our salvation. You are, God be praised, a Catholic; but who can be sincere in his faith, and not wish that all should share it with him? The greatest obstacle to the progress of our preaching in this country is the minister Rabaut; help us to get rid of him.' I thought I would have rushed upon him. Give up Rabaut! I, apostate as I was, would sooner have been cut to pieces in defending him!

"Charnay did not press the matter; he had shot the arrow. Nothing now remained, he doubtless said to himself, but to let the poison act. The poison did indeed act.

"I was worn out with weariness, impatience, and shame. Relations, friends, all were estranged from me. The leaders of the Catholics only vouchsafed me a cold and contemptuous patronage. The only being in the world disposed—as I thought, at least—to love me still, and to share my disgrace, would, I began to fear, never be restored to me.

"Despite of myself, therefore, I recurred to my last interview with Father Charnay. The price that he had attached to Madeleine's deliverance, appeared to me, as at the first moment, so infamous, that under any circumstances, I should never be brought to entertain the thought of it; so impossible was it, as I imagined, that the idea could even enter my mind; but I found myself wishing that the condition imposed upon me had been a little more acceptable—a little less monstrous. I had accustomed myself to the idea of a demand upon my conscience, provided this demand was not too scandalous, and I extended little by little—like the animal that is tied up insensibly lengthening his rope—the circle of criminality in which I could venture to move.

"I went back to the Jesuit. What was my object? I did not define it to myself; I followed I know not what infernal instinct. He guessed by my violence what progress I had made. He renewed his demand; but coolly and decidedly. To give up Rabaut, or never to see Madeleine again; there was, he said, no longer any other alternative. I went away cursing him; but it was no longer solely from horror of the crime, it was also, it was chiefly, because I began to feel that I was drawn towards it!

"The struggle was, however, still obstinate and painful. The expiation was beginning before the crime—even remorse is almost a state of peace compared to the torments of a mind that foresees remorse—that dreads and yet rushes towards it. Twenty times were these tortures of anticipation on the point

of bringing me back to myself and to the past; twenty times, after having exhausted the little strength left me in these last convulsive struggles, I fell back, worn out, into the whirlpool that was carrying me along with it. At last, I thought I had found means of extricating myself. You remember that I had become a Catholic only by becoming an infidel. Your sermon at Nîmes had brought me back to a measure of belief; but the little good seed that had fallen into my heart had long been swept away by these internal storms.

"Suicide could not, therefore, appear a great crime to me. It would save me from one for which I felt the greater horror, the nearer I seemed to committing it; besides, I viewed it as a reparation to be made to my former brethren for their tears on my behalf. They would blame the means used, but they would have the melancholy satisfaction of seeing that I had found only despair and ruin in separating myself from them. One day, then, determined to have done with life, I had wandered on the banks of the Gard since the morning, and, strange to relate, had found in the solemn emotions of a last day, a sort of food that had its charms. I went back in thought to my pilgrimages of former times, when I used to offer up my life to God in our Deserts. It was in vain that my conscience endeavoured to point out to me what a gulf there is between a sacrifice and a crime. The similarity of emotions almost effaced to my view the diversity of circumstances. I wished to taste death; I put off the moment, not from fear, but, on the contrary, precisely because I did not feel afraid, and that I was certain to be equally prepared, whether sooner or later. I at last decided that at the moment the sun should disappear behind the mountain, I should slowly enter the river, the waters of which would soon after roll over my body.

"I had still an hour to live. I sat down on a rock. The

Gard boiled at my feet. The breeze wafted towards me all the perfumes of the shore, all the murmurs of evening. Behind me were some olive-trees, some pine-trees, from whence the birds hailed the close of day; before me was the orb with whose departure my life was to depart likewise—it was brilliant, isolated, and magnified already as it approached the horizon.

"The shadows lengthened. Already those of the opposite bank were encroaching on the bed of the river. The stream flowed on in increased darkness every moment. It was my tomb that was preparing—and some stray shadows, that already stretched as far as my rock, warned me that it was time for me to go down into it.

"I rose. As I stood, I was still out of the reach of the advancing twilight; the sun gave me a last respite. My dazzled eyes were fixed upon it, but if I could have regulated its progress, I would neither have quickened nor slackened it. I needed, in order to shake off some lingering scruples, to resign all will of my own. It was no longer I who purposed to die; it was the sun that commanded me not to survive it.

"At length the mountain encroached upon its disk. The sentence was pronounced. I bowed my head, and went down to the river. The pebbles rolled under my feet. My fixed gaze followed them mechanically, as it had but now followed the sun's course. Did not they likewise trace out my path for me? What could I do better than yield myself up, body and soul, to all that could save me the trouble and the crime of choosing for myself?

"My feet already touched the water. Already on my knees in the river, I only waited the last farewell of the sun on the mountain, to abandon myself to the current. But suddenly I rose. I uttered a piercing cry. I drew back. There,

opposite to me, upon that bank, where the brightness of the sun had hitherto prevented me from distinguishing objects, I had just perceived a man gazing at me, motionless, his arms folded. And in this man, I had recognised Rabaut. How long had he been watching me? I have never known. Besides, his presence in that spot had nothing extraordinary in it. Obliged as he was to avoid all high roads, it was in unfrequented paths that he might be met the oftenest. But I had not seen him again since my abjuration. I, who had not flinched beneath so many angry or sorrowful looks, had constantly apprehended meeting his glance; and amongst the sufferings from which I longed to be released, that very one had come back upon my heart more poignant and more importunate than ever that very day.

"My strength was exhausted. This interminable day had worn down the last springs of my being. I had only kept to the last courage enough to die; where should I find enough to live one moment longer? I felt the ardour that had sustained me during a sleepless night and a day without food, suddenly give way. My knees failed me. I tried in vain to hold on by the rock. I fell down on the sand. Some vague sensations of terror seemed to pass over my mind. Then I remembered nothing more.

"When I came to myself, I was lying on a bed. I heard voices speaking in a low tone. On my moving, a man seated beside me rose. But my eyes were already closed again, for I thought I recognised him whose presence had almost annihilated me on the banks of the Gard. The man spoke. It was a different voice—it was that of Father Charnay!

"He informed me that I was at Nîmes, but he did not add that it was in the house of his Order. I had been found on the high road, at a short distance from the Gard. It was evident from certain indications, that I had been brought

there. By whom? I easily guessed. Charnay was eager to know, but I was silent. I had been taken in at a village. Charnay happened to be in the neighbourhood, and it was he who had had me conveyed into the town.

"He never left me, he loaded me with marks of interest and attention. I knew him too well not to tremble at his kindnesses. He could not come near me without my thinking that he was going to ask me for their payment. And could I doubt that this payment was still the same?

"He came to the point at last; but so slowly, that my apprehensions had worn out all the courage and strength that I had recovered. Besides, I was consumed by fever. My days were spent in perpetual drowsiness, and my nights were sleepless; in the intervals, the faculties left me were almost in a state of annihilation. The door was open to those terrors from which a seducer had everything to hope for.

"He began by showing that his own mind was filled with them. He appeared all at once to perceive and to shudder at the infidelity by means of which he had allowed me to be brought to his Church. I saw him casting looks of anguish upon me; I heard him murmuring in secret the words: 'Lost!—damned!' One day, when I awoke, an immense black crucifix was before me; and instead of teaching me to hope in the mercy of Christ, all the punishments of hell were described to me with a frightful coolness. That crucifix, the emblem of salvation, was now only an emblem of damnation to me. Night came on. These alarming thoughts mingled with my usual delirium. I seemed to be in the midst of flames—to hear the cries of the damned. Phantoms passed and repassed before me; the image of Christ motionless on the cross, seemed to fix upon me eyes of flame. Was it merely the illusion of my senses? When I recalled, long after, all the circumstances of these awful nights, I became

convinced that fraud had had something to do with it. I have seen more than one Protestant converted in your convents by means of this description. Why should there be any scruple in employing them against us, when they have been so often resorted to in these houses against Catholics themselves, in order to force from a delirious imagination vows which could not be obtained either from their heart or their reason?

"In my case, it was conscience that had to be vanquished. I had to be brought to see a meritorious action, where I had hitherto seen only a crime. My attempt at suicide, of which Charnay had forced from me the avowal, marvellously served his purposes. 'A great expiation alone,' said he, 'could absolve me. Ought I not to consider myself happy to atone for so great an offence against God, for the benefit of the Church?' As for the Church, I did not believe in it; I scarcely believed in God, and I abhorred the man who spoke to me of either. And yet I listened to him, and learned to abandon myself wholly to him. I had ceased to have any will of my own, and in some sort to live; I had come to that point that I sought mechanically for some one who could think, act, and live for me.

"What more can I tell you? His perseverance carried the point. In order to expiate one crime, I consented to commit another. Thus, though hardly convalescent, given up, like a corpse, into the hands of my pitiless master, I began to seek for means of satisfying him.

"Treachery was rare in our neighbourhood. It was almost without example that converted Protestants should betray their former brethren. I had therefore no difficulty in ascertaining the time and place of an assembly to be held by Rabaut. It was in one of our *Deserts*, the most worthy of that name. I knew the spot, for assemblies had often been

held there, and it had been considered so suitable that it had been called the *Temple*. Five or six roads led to a little plain surrounded by rocks, from the summit of which our sentinels could see a league round them. The issues hence were numerous. It would have required ten thousand men to surround us, with any hope of success.

"The capture of the minister on the spot itself could not be dreamt of. But I knew the path by which he usually arrived; I had accompanied him several times by it. This path, lost amongst the rocks, seemed made for an ambuscade.

"The soldiers had to be brought there. It was no easy matter; for to have caught sight of even one, at a league's distance, would have been enough to give the alarm throughout the country. I conducted them thither, two and two, disguised as peasants. In the course of ten nights and ten journeys, twenty were lodged in a spacious cavern, which was situated a few steps from the path. The Colonel was of the number; he would not give up to any one else the pleasure and glory that he promised himself from this expedition.

"I thought that my task was ended; but at the last journey, they detained me. The soldiers did not know the minister by sight; it was I who was to point him out to them. It was in vain that I entreated to be spared this odious office. I would have fled, but I was prevented and kept sight of.

"There were still two days to pass before the one of the meeting. How long these two days were! From time to time I succeeded in throwing off serious thought; but it was only to be roused soon after to the full weight of dreadful suffering. When I remembered that I, who had formerly been the hope and example of my brethren, was now to send their leader to the scaffold, I repelled the abominable image as we repel a dream. It seemed as though the dream was about to end, and that I should find I was myself again. Yes, I

did find that I was myself again—but it was only to detest myself yet more! When I shall see through these bars the dawn of my last day, it will give me less alarm than did the dawn of the day on which I was to perpetrate my crime amidst those rocks.

"The arrangements were made. Some soldiers, concealed twenty paces higher up, were to bar the passage at a concerted signal. At the same moment, the others were to issue from the grotto, and the minister was to be taken between the two bands. It had been conceded that I should not appear. When the soldiers had left the cavern, I could glide out, go down the path, and flee.

"My torture now began. Looking through a fissure in the rock, I saw passing, at ten paces from me, all those with whom I had formerly taken the same road. Few spoke; the greater part were serious and devout. Their brows, burnt by the scorching sun of Languedoc, showed a peace to which I compared, with bitterness, my own disquietude. An old man, concealed from me hitherto by others, stopped to take breath—it was my father! He took off his hat, wiped his forehead. How old he had grown! How plainly my story might be read in those wrinkles! I long watched those gray hairs, of which I was going to be the disgrace. After he had disappeared, my eyes still followed his steps.

"I felt my arm pulled—'Is it he? is it he?' said the soldiers hastily. 'No,' said I. But it was indeed one of our ministers, Paul Vincent. The soldiers stamped with their feet; their leader himself evidently had to restrain himself in order to allow such a prey to escape him. But when, an instant after, they perceived two others, two together—'Is it he?—which of the two?' said they, almost aloud; and I thought they would have rushed out of the cavern without even allowing them to reach it. 'No,' said I; 'no, neither

the one nor the other.' It was the pastors Encontre and Guizot, two names, next to that of Rabaut, the most venerated by us, and best known in the province.

"I could no longer breathe. Three already!—one more, and it must be he! for it was very rare to have four in an assembly, and generally there were only one or two. Three already! What if he should not come? or if, at least, he was to pass by another road? But no; I felt that I was about to drink the cup, even to the dregs. It would have seemed to me almost unjust that, after having been brought to consent to the crime, I should not be condemned to perpetrate it. But it appeared as though God took pleasure in putting off the moment. I was not sufficiently overwhelmed; I had not yet sufficiently tasted of infamy.

"A woman approached. She walked with difficulty; but you would have said that she gained strength as she approached those mountains where she came to seek God. That woman was my mother. She passed on. The hour drew near. Some few worshippers who were late, some trembling old men, passed likewise. The soldiers murmured; their leader began to be angry. I began almost to hope.

"After a few moments of silence and solitude, steps were again heard. I looked—there was a fearful noise in my head; an iron hand tightened my temples. I had not seen him yet, but I was about to see him. Four young men, whose eyes were on the watch, came forward cautiously. This was his guard on great occasions, and more than once I had formed part of it. He himself smiled at these fears. 'A guardian in heaven,' said he, 'is better than four here below.' But in spite of himself, he was surrounded by an active watchfulness. Even in our assemblies, besides those who watched on our account, there were always some who were only occupied with him.

"The young men had just passed by us. I descried him. He was twenty or five-and-twenty paces behind them. One man only accompanied him; it was Fabre of Nimes, father of one of the four advanced guard.

"What happened then? I scarcely saw—I scarcely heard. He was only ten paces off, and I had not stirred. 'This time it is he, it is he,' said the Colonel. I think that I tried to say no, but my altered countenance had answered yes. The soldiers grasped their muskets convulsively. The Colonel had one foot on the threshold of the cavern, ready to rush forward the first. But suddenly a whistle was heard. I saw Rabaut stop, fall back, and disappear amongst the rocks.

"In a moment, all the soldiers were outside. They ran forward, but Fabre stopped them. Instead of fleeing with the minister, he had posted himself in the midst of the path. He cried out that they must pass over his body before taking another step. They fell upon him and knocked him down. But it took up a moment, and Rabaut was already at a distance. Several soldiers rushed on in pursuit of him. They searched all the rocks in the neighbourhood; they climbed up all the heights. Twenty balls were ready for him, in case they could not take him alive. At last he was perceived, but out of reach. He was on horseback, galloping off.

"I had remained in a corner of the grotto, almost annihilated. The joy of his escape did not take away the recollection of what I had done for his destruction; the visible intervention of the hand of Providence on his behalf, seemed to add to my treachery all the horror of sacrilege.

"The Colonel was furious. A soldier of the other post had been observed by one of the four young men. It was they who had given the alarm, and the cry of joy with which they had hailed the miraculous escape of the pastor had been heard. The Colonel, on hearing this cry, had well nigh run

the soldier through the body. I heard his imprecations; even the soldiers seemed terrified by them.

"Old Fabre was brought to him. He gave orders, still swearing, to keep him a prisoner. 'Quick!' said he, 'quick! —his hands behind his back. To Nimes, to Nimes! and to the galleys!' 'Obey,' said Fabre; and he held out his hands.

"But the son had remained near. He threw himself before the Colonel—'Not him!' cried he; 'not him. Would you take a man of that age to the galleys? can you think of it? He would die before he reached them. Take me—take me.' And he had already snatched from the hands of a soldier the cords with which they were going to bind his father.

"The debate was long and fearful. It was not only the Colonel who refused to listen; it was the old man who entreated them not to listen to his son. 'You say that I shall die before reaching the galleys? Well, be it so; I shall escape them, but you would remain there, twenty, thirty years —no, no! It is I, it is I you must take.'

"The son began again and again; the soldiers paused— uncertain—affected.

"The infamous Colonel at last burst into a laugh. 'You want to go to the galleys, do you?' said he. 'You shall have enough of them. Take them both'—

"But before he had ceased speaking, the son had snatched a sabre from the hand of one of the soldiers, and, leaning his back against a rock, cried out, 'Both!—come, if you will. It is voluntarily that I have come here. If you will take me against my will, you shall not take me alive.'

"Several soldiers were about to rush on him with their bayonets. The father then cried out with tears, that he consented to the exchange. The Colonel seemed to comprehend that in fact his honour was concerned in not laying hold by force of a man who had voluntarily given himself up. He

ordered them to let the father go. The son no longer resisted. But they were not allowed even time to embrace each other. In a moment, the prisoner and the soldiers were out of sight.

"The father had not been able to follow them. He had returned and sat down at the spot where his son had given himself up. I saw him; I heard his sobs—and even now I ask myself how it was that I did not dash my head against the sides of the cavern! It is said that there are countries where the assassin is bound to the dead body of his victim. There I was, bound to mine; but it was not a dead body! I had to be tortured by my victim's tears, sobs, and looks, myself unobserved; but they did not the less pierce my soul to its very depths, like burning weapons.

"Now, I was on the point of going out of my concealment; of throwing myself at his feet; of confessing all. Whether he pardoned me or not, I cared but little, provided the horrible secret was no longer shut up within me. Again, on the contrary, I seemed to find some alleviation in thinking that he did not know it, that he would never know it, and that there would be no one but myself to curse me. Even this melancholy consolation was about to be taken from me. I saw his son's three companions come to him. They had witnessed, as I understood, this lamentable scene from a distance. They took the old man's hands; they wept in silence.

"'And do you know,' said one of them at last, 'do you know who betrayed us?'

"'Hush!' said another, 'why should we tell him?'

"'Why not, children?' said old Fabre. 'Tell me—tell me. The blow will not be the more cruel.'

"He was mistaken. My name made him start. He repeated it several times, and I saw that he covered his face with his hands.

"'But who told you?' resumed he. 'How is it known? Is it sure?'

"'Too sure,' said they. 'He is remembered to have been seen going out of Nîmes one night with two soldiers, and the next morning, very early, he was met alone. He has brought them here two and two at a time. Come, let us go in.'

"I had only time to thrust myself into a recess. Two of them came in. It was Madeleine's two brothers! The other, as I understood, had remained with the poor father, who would not come in. They went over the grotto. Some fragments of food attested the long stay of the soldiers. They discovered the opening whence the path could be seen. 'They observed us, doubtless,' said one, 'from hence; and who knows?'—he paused. 'What?' said the other. 'Who knows if he was not there, himself to give the signal?'—it seemed to me that they shuddered at this idea. I saw them go out precipitately, as if they had feared to be contaminated by remaining longer where a traitor had been.

"At the first rumour of the event, the assembly had broken up, and the crowd had fled; but as it was known, almost as soon, that the soldiers were gone, many returned. They wished to see a spot, henceforward so sadly memorable. Fabre was already surrounded by friends. I heard the conversations —the accounts—and my name, always my name!

"The grotto was full of people. I shrunk into the farthest depths of my hiding-place, like a reptile. At last I found myself on my knees, in a species of grave; but I still heard all that passed. There was a general movement, then a deep silence. I understood that they were about to pray. A voice well known to me, that of the Pastor Vincent, began by, 'Our help be in the name of God;' but instead of continuing, according to custom, by the confession, he slowly repeated, three times, 'Our help be in the name of God!'

"Never had preacher said so much in so few words; never had so much sorrow been manifest beneath so much faith and courage. This was all his prayer. He felt that each one present had completed it sufficiently, and that by prolonging it he should but weaken the affecting impression produced. He therefore opened the Bible; and it was to wound me afresh. It was with alarm that I heard him begin, with a trembling voice, the story of the Passion. He had scarcely reached the third verse before all present had caught the fearful appropriateness of his words:—

"'Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them. And they were glad'—

"A low murmur, a suppressed shudder, accompanied these words; you would have said, to judge by their sorrowful attention, that it was the first time that they had heard this dark tale. From time to time they appeared to forget me. Silent and impressed, they followed out Christ's lengthened agony. But the pitiless historian had not lost sight of the traitor; and his name, thrown in here and there, as if to cast a shade over the picture, brought back every moment murmurs to their lips and indignation into their hearts:—

"'And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!'

"And further on:—'Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?'

"I thought that the minister was going to speak on the passage he had just read; but what could he have added to that which all had felt? He closed the book, and clasped his hands. For a long time he remained motionless, his eyes raised to heaven; then—but why should I try to repeat his prayer to you? Ah! in your pompous cathedrals, you know

not what it is to pray in a cavern, with death or captivity in prospect, a few steps from the spot where one of the members of the flock has just been torn from the arms of a father! Well, I, who was the author of the catastrophe, found pleasure in mourning with my victims. Treachery, remorse, the dreadful future, all were for an instant forgotten. I went back two years of my life; I had recovered my fervour, my faith, my purity of times past. I should have felt able to finish that prayer which had been begun so eloquently. Nor did I fall back upon my own wretchedness till I heard him pray for me.

"They went away. I had longed for this moment; and yet when it came, I shuddered—I was afraid; it seemed to me as though I had just been present at my own funeral, and that the crowd was leaving me, cold and lonely, in a corner of the burial-ground. At last, I went out; the day was closing in. I waited for night to leave the place; but I had not courage to follow the path. It was across the rocks that I passed to regain the high road.

"I had remained, since my illness, at the house of the Jesuits. When I returned there, I wished to speak to Charnay. He refused to see me, and it was intimated to me, the day after, that I was to quit the house. I learned that the Colonel had thrown upon me the ill success of the expedition; and they were well pleased not to have to pay me for my services. I made but a bad traitor; these gentlemen do not like half measures. When I ventured to speak of Madeleine, they laughed at me; and I could see clearly enough that they had never had any intention of restoring her to me.

"The event had made a great noise in the country. The Duke de Mirepoix, governor of Languedoc, offered not to send young Fabre to the galleys, on condition that Rabaut would quit the kingdom. Fabre had written to the pastor, entreat-

ing him to refuse; the pastor had replied, with the unanimous approbation of the churches, that nothing in the world would induce him to abandon his flock. Fabre had just been sent to Toulon.

"I dared no longer show myself; the very children had learned to turn away from me. The only resource left was to die, or to leave the country. I had no longer any thoughts of dying; I felt as if condemned to live, and condemned in such a way, that it was useless to resist the decree. I resolved, then, to leave the country. I had already thought of it, when I believed that Madeleine was to be restored to me. I intended taking her to seek, in some distant land, that repose which I imagined that she could not find, any more than myself, in our native country.

"I had, as a convert, the odious right of forcing my father to give me enough to live upon away from home.* I wrote to him, declaring that I did not mean to avail myself of this right, and that I had rather starve than do so. I asked him, as an alms, for some money to pay my passage; he sent me what I had asked for, but without one word of reply. I was prepared for reproaches; this silent malediction forced more tears from me than I had yet shed.

"I set out for Bordeaux, where I purposed embarking for the colonies. I was only to stop at Toulouse, to draw at a merchant's of that town the amount of the bill I had received from my father. This merchant, whose name was Calas, was one of the most respectable Protestants of the place. He received me with a degree of kindness that almost surprised me, so thoroughly did it seem to me that my story must be stamped upon my forehead. But hardly had he read my name, when a painful surprise was manifest on his countenance. He began to count out the money, without saying a

* Edict of June 17, 1681.

word; his hand trembled. At last, he asked me, hesitatingly, if I was a *relation* of the person whose *abjuration*—he did not venture to say more—had recently made so much noise. I cast down my eyes; he sighed, and asked me for my father. 'He is,' I said, 'as well as he can be, after'—I did not finish the sentence. 'Yes,' said he; 'I know what it is to lose a son.' 'Has one of your sons abjured!' I exclaimed. He felt that I was glad of this news, as one is to find a companion in misery. He gave me his son's address, adding that he seldom saw him, but that he had not ceased to love him. This was a delicate way of telling me that I did not excite his horror. I admired a charity that could rise above such aversions. I compared it, in spite of myself, with that blind hatred, so general amongst you, against deserters from your Church.

"I went to see Louis Calas; but I found only a sad bigot, whose conversation effaced the little Romanism I had retained from my residence with the Jesuits. He completed my disgust, by openly taking the defence of my conduct against my own feelings. He very nearly congratulated me on having had an opportunity of rising above the vulgar laws of conscience and honour, on behalf of such a sacred cause.

"Through his means, however, I became acquainted with his elder brother, Mark Anthony, whose character and feelings had a singular analogy with my own. Although an infidel, he had not abjured, and it was precisely on account of the advantages offered him by abjuration, and from respect for others. The Protestants of large towns appeared to us in our mountains, viewed from a distance, as much better off than ourselves. It is true, you leave them more undisturbed; but of what privations and grievances unknown to us did they feel, do they still feel, the discouraging influence! They are allowed to make their fortunes in trade; and many, by dint of

their probity,* do grow rich in this pursuit; but as for those who seek for something more than money, whichever way they turn, there is a barrier raised up in their path. The magistracy, the bar, public instruction, medicine, public offices of all kinds, the smallest as well as the greatest, all are impenetrably closed against them; nothing is open to them, exclusive of trade, but that laborious and rugged path of the ministry, where, at every step, they come in contact with the scaffold of some one of their predecessors. But few in towns have strength and courage to enter upon it. It requires one to be inured from infancy to this hard and wandering life—to get gradually accustomed to daily and hourly perils.

"The elder Calas would, I think, have had as much or more courage than any one; but he had not felt a sufficiently serious call to the ministry, and he had given up, conscientiously, the necessary studies. Full of talent and ambition, detesting the humble labours of commercial life, he had felt condemned to vegetate by the side of the paternal desk, without a profession, without prospect. Idleness had led to vice; and vice to infidelity. A multitude of new torments had filled up the fatal void in his existence; indeed, I soon perceived that he cherished the project of getting rid of life as soon as he felt decidedly weary of it.

"Such was Mark Anthony Calas when I knew him; in a few days I was his intimate friend; he persuaded me to remain at Toulouse. 'I had no occasion,' he said, 'for emigrating; I could easily live unknown, in such a populous town; I had only to change my name.'

* Rulhière, in his "Eclaircissements sur la Révocation de l'Edit de Nantes," makes rather a curious observation; it is, that during the former half of Louis XIV.'s reign, the stage and satirical writers are silent on the subject of commercial men, so cried down shortly afterwards. Now, during this period, they were for the most part Protestants. In fact, this commercial and financial probity must have been singularly well established, since, in the height of persecution, when calumny came to the aid of violence so willingly, this cord was never touched.

"I began to like this idea; my wish was to remain. But I must support myself, and by what means? 'Bah!' replied Calas; "in a town there are always resources.' I pressed him farther. At last he pointed out to me a resource, which, he said, had hitherto never failed him—it was gambling. 'Play!' cried I; 'what if I lose?'—'You will not lose.' 'But if I do lose?' I repeated.—'If you should lose? Well, you will do what many others have done—what I shall do likewise if I lose.'

"He frightened me, and I allowed myself to be led by him. I yielded to the influence of vice, as I had done to that of fanaticism, without passion, without enjoyment. You would have said that I myself became the cool executioner of some inexorable decree directed against me. It was not, however, without great agitation, that I passed the threshold of a gambling-house for the first time. I called to mind, with horror, all that I had heard related of these haunts, where so many had left their fortune, honour, and life. The remembrance of good made a last effort to stop me on the extreme verge of evil. It was in vain; but evil, on the other hand, at the very moment that I yielded entirely to its dominion, did not succeed in diverting my mind. 'The first day,' I had said to myself, 'I shall gain; the second, I shall lose; the third—we shall see.' And, in fact, the first day I did gain; the second, I lost; the third, I came back ready to throw upon the table all that I had left.

"Whilst I was waiting for my turn, a voice, but too well known—that of the Colonel—suddenly attracted my attention. He was in an adjoining room (the one in which supper was served after play), with all that was most corrupt, whether of men or women, in Toulouse. I could, without showing myself, see him holding forth in the middle of a group; I even thought I heard my own name. I drew near gradually. He

was in the midst of relating his last *campaign*, as he said, and his ambuscade in the Desert; he had just finished telling how Rabaut had escaped, how he had taken Fabre instead of Rabaut, and at last, the son instead of the father. His hearers were laughing; and indeed, the story, as arranged by him, was almost comic. But when, thinking he had finished, they were dispersing—'You think you are come to the end,' said he—'you do not yet know the most curious part of it.' They came back; I slipped in amongst the crowd to about three steps from him. 'You remember,' resumed he, 'the poor simpleton, whom we had brought to do all we wanted, with the name of his Madeleine. The best part of it is, that whilst he was led by speaking to him of her, she was not the less led, though, as you shall see, in a different way, by speaking to her of him.' Then was unfolded, to the great diversion of my neighbours, the abominable scheme, that I might have suspected, but that I never could have imagined to be so terribly perfidious.

"Madeleine, then, had daily received news of me as false as those that were brought to me of her. Long before my abjuration, when I had scarcely begun to entertain thoughts of it, it had been announced to her as accomplished; it was I who desired, who recommended her to follow my example. Stronger in mind than I, this first stroke had not shaken her; a second was in store for her. For some weeks she heard nothing of me; she wept over me in silence, but she wished to hear nothing further of me. At last she was brought to ask what had become of me; then they pretended not to be able to venture a reply. She pressed them. At last they told her that I was just married. But those who sought to convert her gained nothing again this time by their falsehoods. Happier than I was, she had still God with her; she wept, but she was not vanquished.

"This narrative threw me into a state of the most varied emotions. I was happy and proud to find that Madeleine was as pure, as worthy of my former self as ever; but there was not one of these details which did not show me, at the same time, how unworthy I now was of her. In short, even in the midst of these revelations, where she appeared to me so firm and so courageous, the triumphant air of the narrator let me know that I had not come to the end; and I waited, with increasing anxiety, for a conclusion that I trembled to find little in accordance with the beginning.

"He then began to tell how that, having had opportunities of seeing Madeleine, he had been pleased with her. The part that he acted in the conversions of the province, through his regiment, gave him access to the convent. He had found means of speaking to her alone; he had evinced admiration for her constancy, and compassion for her misfortunes. A proficient in the arts of seduction, he had invariably remained respectful and serious. She had accepted without distrust the offer of his assistance in escaping from that odious house. One night, therefore, he had carried her off. He intended, as he said to her, to take her immediately to her parents; then, appearing to reflect that she would not be in safety there, at least at first, he had offered her an asylum at the house of a noble lady that she knew by name. 'I did not even speak of accompanying her,' added he. 'She got into my carriage; she saw me close the door respectfully; the trick was played; the bird was taken.'

"'Bravo, Colonel!' exclaimed a young officer, who was listening behind me. The Colonel, turning round, saw me. I observed him turn pale; he seemed as if he was going away —the story being done.

"'What next,' they cried out, 'what next!' and they followed him laughing, for they had no idea but that he was

in jest, and that this species of flight was only to excite their curiosity; but I pressed forward before the others, and throwing myself in front of him: 'What next, sir?' said I, in a tone which it was easy to see had nothing of pleasantry in it.

"But this sudden attack had already restored his presence of mind; he stopped, and with profound disdain said, 'What next? do you take me for some one that may be questioned —or that may be made to speak by threatening?'

"'You shall speak!' I cried out.

"I had already seized him by the arm; but his friends threw themselves upon me. Calas, who would have defended me, could not even approach us; in an instant, we were both turned out. I was beside myself; I wanted to hasten to the Hôtel de Ville, and lay a complaint before the magistrates. Calas laughed at me: 'A complaint for a scene in a gambling-house!—a complaint against the Marquis de Narniers, the right hand of the clergy in the province!' There was, besides, added he, a certain magistrate, David de Baudrigue, the sworn enemy of the Calas family, who would at once be mine if he knew I was their friend. In short, I must either swallow the affront, or ask for satisfaction, sword in hand.

"A duel! here was another of those things the very name of which, from a lingering remnant of my former feelings, seemed to me an outrage against the most sacred laws; but it was ordained that I should destroy all that I had worshipped. An hour later, I was at the corner of the street—a sword under my arm—waiting for the Colonel to come out. He came out; I went up to him. Calas kept a few paces off.

"'Sir,' said I, 'you cannot of course expect that the thing should pass in this way. Answer—or defend yourself.'

"But he, without even stopping, said, 'These people are really strangely insolent.' Then, half turning round, as if dismissing a beggar —

"'But, my good fellow, where did you ever see a gentleman cross words with a common person?'

"I rushed upon him—I laid hold of him.

"'You shall either defend yourself or die,' I repeated.

"Did I really mean to kill him if he refused to fight? no; God is my witness that I did not mean it. What would I have done? I cannot tell; but already, as I grasped him, I asked myself what I ought to do. I was more vigorous than he. It was in my power to stab him; but that alone would have deterred me, if even I had wished it at first.

"At last I thought that he put his hand to his sword—I let him go—and scarcely was his arm free, when the ball of a pistol grazed my cheek; but I had had time to see him raise his weapon. I had thrown myself on one side, and at the very moment that the fire flashed, I heard a cry; in throwing my arms forward, as if to parry the blow, I had stabbed him. The windows were opened—the street was lighted up. Calas drew me away; I remained for some days concealed at the house of a friend of his. I learned that search had been made at his lodgings. He declared that he had left me shortly after our expulsion, and neither knew what I had done, nor what had become of me. The affair was, however, being actively investigated; nothing was spoken of but the attempt to assassinate the Marquis de Narniers. The description of the culprit, as exact as it could be given, had been sent everywhere; and a sum of money was promised to whoever should lead to my discovery.

"Although I had no fear as to the intentions of my host, I resolved to quit Toulouse. To live in confinement was a punishment to me; I wanted air and space, even if I had to risk at every step my liberty and my life. I set out: a long beard and ragged clothes gave me the appearance of one of

those wandering beggars, who are allowed in the south by the patrol to beg through the country.

"This half-savage life, after I had submitted to it for some days as a necessity, was about to appear to me under quite a new aspect. I shall never forget the moment when this strange transformation took place. It was evening, by the side of the high road, on the edge of a wood in which I was going to seek a shelter for the night. Around me were trees; before me, hills, behind which the sun was about to disappear—the whole scene, in short, of the banks of the Gard! But here, beneath my feet, instead of the river darkening and murmuring, was the high road—silent and white—the high road, my only home now, as the waters of the Gard had appeared to me my only asylum when I resolved to end my days there. It seemed to me as if I were again at the spot, at the foot of the same rock where I had fallen, when I observed Rabaut. The road had miraculously covered the bed of the river. My condemnation seemed to be written there, where the crime was to have been committed; my life, instead of ending, was to drag on indefinitely from road to road, from village to village, from town to town, until the voice within, that cried out 'Go on!' should tell me to stop. And in this way, from road to road, from village to village, from town to town, I have reached, in two years, the place where you found me. Never, during these two years, have I slept under a habitable roof; never has a second night found me in the same place. Seated like the penitents of the first centuries, at the doors of churches, I have never crossed their threshold. As the house of God, I felt unworthy to enter them; as the priest's house, I could not have entered them without horror; and never has a priest passed by me, that my indignant heart did not murmur at the sight of him; 'Thanks to you—thanks to you and

yours, I am here!' Do you now understand what I felt at Meaux when I asked alms of you?"

"I understand," said Bridaine; "have you done?"

"I have done."

"You have not told me all. What has become of Madeleine?"

"I am quite ignorant."

"Quite?"

"Quite; I had laid upon myself as a law never to inquire. What should I gain by it? If she is pure, the remembrance of her would but aggravate my remorse. If she is fallen, I should have to weep for her, and accuse myself of her ruin."

Bruyn spoke the truth; he knew nothing of the fate of his betrothed. We have seen that she was at Meaux. Let us relate, before going further, how she had come thither.

The Marquis had detained her at Toulouse. Though free at first, at least apparently, she had gradually become his prisoner. He thought it amusing to put in practice what he had seen only in romances. But it was lost labour. Both persuasion and threatenings had failed against Madeleine's virtue. He soon saw that he must either give her up, or have recourse to violent measures, which he disliked using, for he had, resolute though he was, been influenced by his victim. He was angry with himself for respecting her so much. He detained her from self-love, and would, in fact, have been glad to get rid of her.

It was the abbé who came to his assistance. The priest boasted that he would be more successful than the soldier; he pretended that before a month was over, he would bring Madeleine to the point to which the Marquis had not been able to bring her in a year.

He had therefore brought her to Meaux. A month—a

year, had elapsed, and the seducer in the cassock had had no better success than the other.

"You have, then, nothing further to tell me?" resumed Bridaine.

"No."

"Nothing to ask of me?"

"No. Stop—yes—I have two things to ask you."

"Let me hear them."

"The one is, to accompany me when they take me."

"Be it so. But I hope"—

"Let us hope for nothing. Do you promise me?"

"I promise."

"But I tell you beforehand, that it is a friend I want, and not a confessor."

"Unhappy man! would you reject"—

"All that does not proceed from God. I desire to be taught how to approach Him; I will not let any one come between me and Him."

"Are you, then, become a Protestant again?"

"I am becoming a Christian again."

"A Christian! to refuse"—

"All that does not proceed from God: I have said so already. Would you like better to have found me an infidel again?"

Bridaine sighed. He could not in truth conceal from himself, that a submissive infidel, ready to confess, would have shocked him, at first sight, less than a man refusing from conviction his assistance as a priest. Rome has always been infinitely more indulgent to those who do not believe at all, than to those whose belief is different from her own; and it would be very difficult, not to say impossible, for a priest always to escape from this strange influence. We have seen that Bridaine himself, at Nîmes, offered of his own accord a

simple blessing to Bruyn; and now he was alarmed at the idea of letting him die without giving him officially—what?—that pardon which he knew to be of no avail unless ratified by God.

"No," resumed he, "I cannot. If I accompany you—where you say—it must be as a priest."

"Well, let us say no more about it. I had one thing more to ask you."

"Speak."

"There is but one forgiveness in the world, that could appear to me, when dying, a pledge of the forgiveness of God."

"I understand you."

"Try and let me see him before I die, who alone can give it to me. Is he still at Meaux?"

"He is at Paris; but I do not know where."

"Have you no trace of him?"

"None."

"Then there is no hope? But no—stay—do you know M. de Gebelin?"

"The orientalist? No. But if it only requires to go and see him"—

"You would go? Well, in God's name, go to him. He is M. Rabaut's friend. He cannot but know where he is."

"I shall go. Farewell, my son."

"Farewell—Father. Your blessing at Nîmes did me good."

"Receive it once more. Farewell."

The prisoner rose up, as if to accompany the priest. The noise of his chains reminded him that he could but advance one step. He stopped.

"You see," said he.

"What matters it, if the soul be free?"

"Yes; but if it is not?"

And he sat down again sorrowfully.

CHAPTER XV.

Bridaine, however, after having almost promised to save the Cévenol, did not know how to enter upon the business; he even considered it very fortunate, that this faint ray of hope had not dazzled the prisoner too much, for he could not conceal from himself that it might easily vanish. Under Louis XV., justice did not easily let go her prey. Notwithstanding the wise decrees that Louis XIV. had thrown in the way of former errors, the latter were far from having been all rejected. "When M. de Malesherbes," says Morellet, "had read my *Inquisitor's Manual*, he said to me, 'You think that you have collected extraordinary facts, and unheard-of proceedings? Well, that jurisprudence is very nearly our criminal jurisprudence in all points.'" It was true. The judges were generally better than the system of justice, but they were not to be trusted. Every accused person was considered guilty; a condemned person still more decidedly. It might easily happen that Bridaine could move the judges by the recital of Bruyn's misfortunes, and yet that Bruyn should not the less suffer for the honour of the Parliament of Toulouse, and of justice in general. The life of an obscure individual was beginning to count as something, but much more in the books of the day than at the bar of a court of justice, or on the scaffold.*

* The state of the prisons corresponded with the barbarity of the system. The greater number were fearful sewers, where both accused and condemned herded together like

Bridaine, besides, was not aware of the good intentions of the Marquis de Narniers, but he was equally resolved to try all means. He would, if necessary, go and see all the councillors one after the other. He would make the archbishop interfere. He would call upon the Marquis to tell the truth, and confess that there had been no attempt at assassination. In short, he would even go to the Duke de Choiseul—to the king. Did he not know the way?

Whilst he was walking through the passages of the Palais de Justice, full of these thoughts, a smell of burnt paper suddenly attracted his attention. He feared that fire had broken out; but no one, among those who were coming and going, appeared to be anxious about it.

As he reached the foot of the great staircase in order to get out, he found the explanation he had been seeking for before him.

There was a fire in the midst of the court, and some books were burning upon it. He understood that it was one of those innocent *auto-da-fés*, of which the sight was from time to time afforded to the people of Paris.

Few on-lookers, however, were at this moment in the court or its vicinity. People might be seen coming and inquiring—the thing had evidently not been announced beforehand; it even seemed as if it was carried on out of sight. A crier read the sentences, but so low and so fast, that those nearest to him could hardly catch some words. Two councillors, in their

the commonest cattle. It was only under Louis XVI. that people began to take an interest in the material condition of the prisoner. The Abbé de Besplas, when preaching at Versailles, drew a picture of it, which deeply struck the king. The courtiers were astonished that such horrors should have passed unobserved in a century of such refinement. Besides, the hospitals were no better than the prisons. At Paris, as many as three sick persons were put into one bed—a century earlier, as many as six. Let it be observed, by the way, that these details are very unlike what Châteaubriand has related of the marvels of Roman Catholic charity. Protestant countries were already much more humane.

gowns, presided over the execution; they seemed rather embarrassed. One of them in particular seemed to think that the registrar did not read quick enough, and that the books burned too slowly; and more than one laughing clerk was watching privately the effects of this impatience on the very ugly face of the Abbé Chauvelin—for it was he. Every one, even to the executioner, seemed in a hurry to have it over. Instead of *lacerating* the books, as the sentence ordered, he confined himself to tearing out one or two pages, and the fire did the rest. Not but that all the writings they were making a pretence of destroying that day were bad, detestable in themselves. Already had disappeared in the flames the *Lettres Chinoises*, by d'Argens, the *Vision*, by Grimm, *Christianisme dévoilé*, by Damilaville, *L'Homme-plante*, by La Mettrie, five or six pamphlets in which Voltaire's hand betrayed itself at every line, five or six works signed by names more or less known; all these authors fancying themselves clever for having tried to prove that man is but an animal. The harvest, as we see, was abundant; and we must allow, that unless the Parliament gave up burning at all, it could not have made a better choice for the flames. But from the president down to the crier, from the attorney-general to the executioner, all felt, all knew that it was lost labour. Either, as partisans of the new ideas, they only saw in it a comedy to be acted, until the age should be ripe for the regeneration prophesied, or, more sincere in what they did, they only understood the better the uselessness of their proceeding, and the nullity of their efforts. Hence the embarrassment of all; hence the strange precautions by which they sought at least to avert the ridicule, even although they were obliged to cast some grains of incense into the flames in which they burned the books.

There remained but one to burn. Bridaine thought that

the two councillors looked still more embarrassed. The crier read so low, so very low, that decidedly nothing could be heard. The passers-by had gradually increased the number of spectators; there was almost a crowd. "Louder!" cried some one. "Louder!" repeated several others, and the crier raised his voice a little. Bridaine listened; he thought he distinguished the words *poison*, *philosophy*, *venom*, *wit*.

"Ha! ha!" said a young clerk, "it seems that it is the *Esprit* of M. Helvetius."

"Indeed!" said another; "have you just found that out? It is on his account that the ceremony has been got up."

"On his account?—and all the others?"

"The others were only there to keep him company. The gentlemen of the Parliament consented to burn the book, but they would not annoy the author, who is the friend of almost all of them; besides—you understand—the queen's *maître d'hôtel*, a late farmer of the taxes, with a hundred thousand crowns a year! When the poison is contained in a gold cup, it is the least that can be done, to throw it politely into the fire. The gentlemen have devised, therefore, this means of joining in one batch all that was burnable in France."

"Do you call that being polite? If my name was Helvetius, I should not be flattered at having my ashes mingled with those of some whose names are there."

"But his name is not in the sentence. What they wanted, you see, was not to look as if the Parliament had lighted the fire for him.—Are you going to burn, M. Executioner? Well, whilst you are about it, come, burn this little trifle for us. There, the crier has just passed the book to Samson. Courage, friend Samson! Tear away!—a little harder! Egad! to-day, indeed, you may be called executioner of all kinds of subjects.*

* "Exécuteur de toutes sortes d'œuvres." The name given to the hangman in France is "Exécuteur des hautes œuvres."—*Trans.*

Good! there is *l'Esprit* in the fire; it burns, but it does not sparkle. The fact is, I found it dreadfully heavy."

"Have you read it?"

"Six pages, of which I understood nothing—unless that instead of its being entitled *De l'Esprit*, it would have been more candid to call it *De la Matière!*—Come, what is that? A man ready to throw himself out of a window?"

In fact, a man had just been perceived at the fourth story of a neighbouring house, clapping his hands. Two or three others, nothing of whom was seen but their arms, were trying to hold him back; but he leaned more and more out of the window, and clapped his hands, which remained at liberty. At last they drew him back into the room, and the window was closed. The burning of Helvetius was over.

"Some madman," said one of the two clerks.

"Or some devotee," said the other, "whose head has been turned with joy at the smell of this infidelity burning. That is the end, I believe."

"Probably.—No; what are those men bringing there?"

Two porters had just rolled a great bale of books near to the smoking remains of Voltaire and Helvetius. Then the crier read in a nasal tone, but perfectly loud and clear this time, and like a man quite at his ease, the following sentence:—

"The Court,—Seeing the king's declaration, dated April 24, 1729, concerning the books for the use of the pretended Reformed Religion, under whatever title, form, or denomination:

"Considering that, notwithstanding the said declaration, and the sentences pronounced for the application of the same, there have recently been made divers attempts to introduce these books into the kingdom, in order to perpetuate the poison that the late king, of glorious memory, had begun to

extirpate, and that the king, our present sovereign, had wisely pursued, even to its last receptacles:

"Seeing the constatation, dated May 15, 1760, that a bale of the said works has been seized at the house of one Dumont, a bookseller at Paris:

"Having heard the declarations and requisitions of the attorney-general in respect of the said Dumont:

"Seeing the king's declaration, dated August 10, 1685, pronouncing condemnation to a fine of 1500 livres, and forfeiture of their license, upon the booksellers who should either keep or sell similar books:

"Considering, on the one hand, that he has not denied his knowledge of the contents of the said bale:

"Considering, on the other hand, that he declares not to have sold any of the volumes contained in it, but to have waited, without even opening it, till a third person, unknown to him, should come and fetch it:

"Declares, that he do not forfeit his license:

"Condemns Dumont to a fine of 1500 livres only, one-third of which is awarded to the Crown, one-third to the General Hospital of Paris, and one-third to the informer, who has requested, according to the tenor of the decrees, not to be named.

"As regards the books so seized,

"Orders that they be diligently conveyed by the attorney-general's directions to the Court's depository, to be lacerated and burned by the executioner, in the court of the palace, at the foot of the great staircase, as pernicious and seditious, contrary to the laws and maxims of the religion of the State.

"Given at Paris, July 15, 1760."

During the reading of the above, the executioner's men had rekindled and increased the fire. The attendants emptied the bale. There were found in it three or four hundred volumes;

and, as far as could be judged from a distance, they were three or four hundred copies of the same book. The executioner took up one, then a second, then another, and threw them successively into the flames, after having torn them in two. The fourth time, he took an armful; then another, and so on; now and then he tore one of them. At last, all were on fire; but it was only by dint of fagots that the conflagration was kept up. The public began to laugh, and the two councillors prudently retired into the palace. People began to scramble for the half-burnt leaves, that the smoke carried as far as the outside of the court. Many seemed amused by them. Some, after having deciphered a few lines, showed them to each other, with looks of surprise.

The book that had just been lacerated and burnt by the hangman, at the foot of the staircase of the Palace of Justice at Paris, in the year of our Lord, 1760, was—

Bridaine had picked up two leaves, and had put them into his pocket, with a sigh. Let us leave them there; we shall find them again shortly.

It has been understood, doubtless, from what window proceeded those singular signs of applause. But from whom did they proceed? This remains for us to relate.

The guests of Helvetius had been exact to their appointment. The occasion made it worth while; besides, no one willingly missed an invitation of M. Helvetius, even were it given for a fourth story, and one of the narrow streets of the city. To those whom we have seen at d'Alembert's were joined, by special invitation, some other members of the sect, the Abbé Raynal, already celebrated, the Abbé Morellet, who was about to become so, for he was just come out of the Bastile, St. Lambert, author of the *Saisons*, Thiriot, Voltaire's factotum, two or three less known, Dr. Roux included, the same who preached atheism with so much unction and *faith*.

Had the quarter of the town appeared to them rather dirty, and the staircase rather steep, they could not but forget both on entering. The humble rooms hired by the late farmer of taxes had been metamorphosed, in a few days, into charming little apartments.

When they had sufficiently expressed their wonder, for they had not suspected that he had dreamed of anything else but receiving his friends suitably—

"Come," said he, "you have not seen all." And he opened, with a face of satisfaction, a little kitchen, fitted up as neatly as the rest, clean and nice, furnished with all the necessary utensils, but with common utensils, which were evidently not placed there for the purpose of a breakfast to be given by him. "Well," resumed he, "can you guess? I intended that our frolic of to-day should be an opportunity for a good deed. In the teeth of the Parliament, that is about to burn my book, I am going to settle here, no later than to-morrow, an excellent young man of my acquaintance, a clerk of Dumont, the bookseller. He is going to be married. He has not a penny, save 500 livres that a cousin of his has left him, he tells me. He intended to spend them in making his nest—and here is his nest built, and he keeps his 500 livres. He knows nothing of it yet. I wish to-morrow was come, that I might see his joy. He is going to invite me to the wedding; I shall go! I mean to go! It will be one of my happy days. Well, well! gentlemen of the Parliament, while you are taking away my reputation in your way, I must regain it in mine."

Such was Helvetius. It would have been necessary to seek amongst the highest order of Christians in order to find professing believers as happy to do good as he was: if he did his best to deprive people of the hope of another life, it is but giving him his due to say, that he left nothing undone like-

wise, to alleviate the troubles of this for them. Everything in him seemed to breathe benevolence. His face, which was one of the handsomest in the kingdom, pleased without intimidating; he did not like to be with people who were not at their ease in his presence. He excelled in giving without humbling, without giving pain—very unlike the coarse La Popelinière, his imitator, who did no better than throw his money out of the window, and make his house a dull resort for everybody. We must add, however, that he often allowed himself to be deceived. Is this a criticism? Is it an additional eulogium? As we please. At least, it is certain, that if he renounced the rewards of heaven in doing good, those of earth did not fail him—the whole coterie, from Voltaire down to the commonest versifiers, vied with each other in raising temples to him. Helvetius was the virtuous man of the day, the living reply to whoever dared pretend that in order to be good, a man must believe in God. To what degree may this opposition and these praises have influenced his love of what was good? Without these flatterers, would he have loved it as much? Did he perform good actions or *splendid sins?* as St. Augustine says. God only knew, and we are not called upon to judge.

As to his importance as a philosopher, it would be superfluous to show how much his position and his services had contributed to raise the sect. Very few infidels of the present day would subscribe his book; very few would be proud of having written it; indeed, they would have no reason to be so, for such a work could have no kind of success. "The work does not answer to its title. The author emphatically proves common truths; and what is new is not always true. He outrages humanity by placing pride, ambition, avarice, and friendship on the same line. It contains false quotations, puerile stories, a mixture of inflated and poetic style, with the

language of philosophy. Little order, a great deal of confusion, a disgusting affectation in praising bad writings, a tone of decision still more disgusting," &c. &c. It is not we who have written this, it is Voltaire.* D'Alembert, Grimm, Raynal, Diderot himself, who had composed more than one page of it—in short, all the author's friends expressed the same opinion of the book in private, which did not prevent them, according to their usual habit, from overwhelming with sarcasms whoever dared to speak ill of it openly.

To say the truth, the refutations had generally been miserable; the greater part were not so good as the work, perhaps worse.† We have already had occasion to remark how barren France was in good apologetic works. Amidst the overflowing of antichristian publications, scarcely could a few works be descried here and there, which did not by their weakness aid the efforts of impiety. In spite of so many charges written or not written by the bishops, the best work was still Abbadie's apology, which had had so much success at the end of the last century.‡ It was often reprinted; bishops recommended it; professors quoted it; they only forgot to add, that Abbadie was a Protestant and a minister, and would have perished like another, if he had been taken bringing his book into France.

Great were the praises, therefore, bestowed on account of the *excellent young man* that Helvetius was going to set up in his lodgings. Then they sat down and conversed.

A conversation amongst literary people in 1760, was some-

* Letter to Thiriot, Feb. 7, 1759.

† "Catéchisme des Cacouacs," by the Abbé de St. Cyr, sub-governor of the royal children; "Catéchisme de l'Esprit," by the Abbé Gauchat; "Remerciement aux philosophes du jour," by Rémond de St. Sauveur, &c. &c.

‡ The "Traité de la Religion Chrétienne," by Abbadie, had appeared at Rotterdam in 1684. "Till now," wrote Bussi to Madame de Sévigné, "I have not been moved by all the other books that spoke to me of God; but this makes me value what I did not esteem. Once more, it is an admirable book. He brings before me vividly all that he tells me, and obliges my reason to doubt no longer what appeared incredible to it."

thing quite confusing. In the present day, we talk of literature, or politics, or philosophy, or science; at that period, they were talked of, all at once, for all was connected, all was mixed up together, and it was in great measure on this account that the Encyclopædia, a medley of so many things, was the truest expression of the society of that day. When we meet together now, everybody—thanks to the newspapers—comes with an immense common fund of ideas and facts; then, this common fund had to be formed in these very meetings. Every time that people saw each other, everything had to be said; each person had to give information to all the others, and the party in general to each one in particular.

There were then no newspapers, at least in the sense that the word has taken since the Revolution. The two publications that came nearest to it—the *Gazette de France*, and the *Mercure*, were but what we should now call *Reviews*.

The *Gazette de France* had often changed character; at one time free—with the exception, of course, of the censure; at another, attached to the department of foreign affairs, of which it became the official organ: its nature and composition were however always nearly the same. It gave all that the Government thought proper to publish, or to allow to be published, whether of domestic, or above all, of foreign events. There were few or no leading articles, save, from time to time, some sallies against the enemies of the French nation. The news of the Court might be read there; the marriages of the great; the receptions of ambassadors; the hunts, balls, births, and deaths of the great. There were many things wanting there, about which every one would have been glad to have a few lines at least; but it might be seen at great length how such and such a squadron had appeared in the Indian or Mexican seas; how such a Pacha had either made or promised reparation to the French flag; how the hardy mariners of St.

Malo and Havre-de-Grâce had taken so many whales; how some of the Jesuit Fathers had just been appointed mandarins, &c.

The *Mercure* was rather less the journal of government, and rather more that of the nation, inasmuch, at least, as the nation might then be said to be recognised. The Encyclopædia, through Marmontel, had a hand in it; but the Marmontel of the *Mercure* could not be the Marmontel of the Encyclopædia. The *Mercure* was chiefly a literary journal; facts only appeared in it, dressed up in sounding prose or in verse, more or less humorous. It was its business to narrate, after a victory, how the regiments of *Champagne* or *Normandy*, those patterns of the olden times, had beat the English, Germans, or others; it was its business to cry out, after a defeat, "All is lost, save honour!" which was not always quite true.

Let us notice, to complete the picture, the *Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques*, organ of the Jansenists, the *Journal de Trévoux*, organ of the Jesuits, the *Année Littéraire*, by Fréron, one or two other reviews; and these, with the reports of the Academy, give us all the periodical publications of the past century. There appeared nothing daily; nothing that was complete; nothing that was not necessarily far behind everyday conversation.

We complain, and not without reason, of the inaccuracies that abound in the public journals. But how long do these errors last? Generally not more than four-and-twenty hours. What one journal has misrepresented, ten others certify. If it has given us false news to-day, to-morrow it contradicts them. Printing, besides, necessarily stops the progress of misrepresentation. If it has the inconvenience of taking up things rapidly, which are but half true, it settles them, at least, before they have time to become entirely false. Discussion is entered upon; proofs are brought in; it rarely happens that in a few days the most complicated matters are

not cleared up. At that period, there was nothing of the kind. All that labour which is done in the present day between journals and from documents, had then to be done in the drawing-room circle, and that upon hearsay, upon narratives modified from one hour to another, from moment to moment, as they passed from mouth to mouth. Some, from indolence, made up their minds to believe everything, and they could be made to admit every species of absurdity; others argued for ever, and the conversation of even the greatest men often turned into gossip.

Our Encyclopædists, all but Grimm, had been scarcely half an hour assembled, and what had they not discussed! Two or three subjects, however, had had the precedence. One, the most agitating, was the representation of the *Ecossaise*, which had taken place the night before, but had almost run the risk of not taking place, for the Government had repented of having permitted it, and it had been feared, up to the very last day, that the authorization would have been withdrawn. Orders had been sent to change the name of *Frélon* in the piece, which too nearly resembled that of Fréron.*

The success had not come up to their expectations. A certain part of the public had applauded, but the real public had remained indifferent. The piece had appeared weak, very weak, as in fact it is, and manifestly inferior to the one of which it was intended to obliterate the impression. The *Ecossaise* had only served to recall the *Philosophes*, and to excite the wish to read or see that play again. If Palissot in his attack had not always preserved the best taste, Voltaire, in the reply, had always maintained the very worst. His *Frélon* is a species of brute, whose absurd and odious part has not even the merit of being necessary for the plot. It is only a coarse appendage, but an appendage in view of which all

* It had been changed to *Wasp*, the English of *Frélon*.

the rest has been too evidently done. Five acts, in fact, to bring about five or six scenes far more abusive than witty. If this opinion should seem severe, we would refer to that of Grimm, in his correspondence, some weeks before the representation of the piece.

The public trial had brought out all these defects. The Encyclopædia felt itself decidedly but ill avenged. They tried to throw the blame upon the actors: it was Mademoiselle Gaussin who had spoiled the character of Lindane; it was Mademoiselle Dangeville who had spoiled that of Polly. Brizard had weakened the part of Monrose; Armand had not understood Fabrice, &c. &c. But they concluded by agreeing that neither Lindane, nor Fabrice, nor Monrose, nor Polly, were after all worth much. They asked each other in alarm, if the patriarch was on the decline, and calculated, not without uneasiness, the chances that he might have of raising himself again by his *Tancred*, then on rehearsal.

On the subject of *Tancred*, a question had recently arisen. When Amenaïde was to be led to death, should the scaffold be seen by the public? It was Mademoiselle Clairon's idea, who was to act Amenaïde. Opinions were divided; the author's decision was waited for with eager impatience.

Was it one of those questions, the importance of which arises out of the want of more serious subjects, and the idleness of those who discuss it? No; it contained the germ, as appeared at a later period, of discussions of the highest import. *Tancred*, without the scaffold, was Racine; *Tancred*, with the scaffold, Shakspere.

It was on this account Voltaire trembled. He had written to the actress to forbid her thinking of it; to his correspondents to entreat them not to permit the thing, and Thiriot showed a letter in which this passage might be remarked:—

"What say you of Clairon, with her scaffold on the

stage? Is it not a fine idea, to change the French stage into a Place de Grève? My dear friend, we must fight the English, but not imitate their barbarous stage. Let us study their philosophy—let us send away the Jesuits, and hunt the wolves—let neither inoculation nor attraction be foolishly contended against—let us learn from them to cultivate the earth; but let us take care not to imitate their savage stage. No, no! such an abominable fancy is fit only for the English theatre. If the scaffold were for Fréron, I should say nothing; but for Clairon, I cannot put up with it."

"Always Fréron!" said Helvetius.

He did not like this bitterness. "He desired to make war upon ideas," he said, "not upon men."

"Always," said Damilaville. "He cannot rest when Fréron is concerned. See what he writes me, under the same date: 'It is not enough to make Fréron ridiculous—the pleasure is to crush him.'"

"That is very wrong," resumed Helvetius. "We attack; others defend themselves. When we give blows, why are we indignant and astonished if we receive them? Go on. What more does he say?"

"'— the pleasure is to crush him; but all these passions are annihilated before the cordial hatred that I bear the impudent Omer. Since I cannot cut off the hand with which he wrote his infamous petition, I'"—

"Enough," said Helvetius. "It would be very disgraceful for us if such lines should come to be known. M. de Fleury has done his duty; he has shown more courage in attacking my book than I in writing it."

It was true; but Helvetius was almost the only one who did not allow himself to be carried away by those implacable animosities, the heat of which was kept up by Voltaire.

"He takes care," resumed he, "not to write me such things.

I, too, have a letter; here it is.* He calls the attorney-general 'our enemy,' and nothing more. He consoles me by speaking of the progress of philosophy."

"And he gives you," added d'Holbach, "a curious specimen of it. You would never guess, gentlemen, the visit that he has recently had at Ferney—the son of our Omer himself!"

This, too, was true. Whilst the father was ordering Voltaire's writings to be burnt at Paris, the son went to sacrifice at Ferney, upon the altar of the divinity of the day.

They spoke of Ferney, of Voltaire. They also spoke of Rousseau.

What did they say of him? They did not know what to say; he was becoming more inexplicable every day. His *Nouvelle Heloïse*, his *Julie*, as they said, was expected with growing eagerness. The booksellers were besieged by people inquiring about it; its success was certain—more than certain.

"Well," said d'Holbach, "I went to Montmorency yesterday, and found Rousseau more out of spirits, more bearish, than ever; he had rudely refused, that very morning, a basket of game that the Prince de Conti had sent him, with a message, as an additional attention, to say that the game was killed by his own hand. On being entreated by the bearer of it, he kept it, but wrote immediately to Madame de Boufflers, that it was the last he would accept. Observe that he had received, a few days before, a visit from the Prince himself, of which he appeared to me very proud, in spite of all his disdain. He spoke to me a dozen times of his *misfortunes;* I tried a dozen times in vain to make him tell me a little distinctly what he meant by that term. The Luxembourg family are more than ever attentive to him. The hermitage is delightful; it is the hermit who is mad. All the good

* Voltaire always sent off several letters at a time.

sense he has, transforms itself into genius, and escapes by his pen; very soon he will not have a grain left. He sees enemies everywhere—snares everywhere—calumny everywhere. I imagined I was the last person that he would distrust. By no means; he almost received me ill. I have meddled, as he gave me to understand, and that with his Theresa, in certain plots against him. I thought at first that it concerned plots against his honour as a husband—an idea somewhat absurd, when the wife has so few charms, and above all, is so clever; but no, it was not even that. What was it, then? You know quite as much about it as I do.* The plots formed against him vanish, like his misfortunes, as soon as he is called upon to explain them. I reasoned with him as I best could; he let me go on, and began again as if I had said nothing. I compared him in my own mind to those people who always think they have a robber hid under their bed. They look—there is no robber. They get up again—the robber is come back. Meanwhile, he is excessively unhappy, and will be, I think, more and more so."

"So much the worse for him!" said Diderot, abruptly.

"You do not like him, Diderot," resumed d'Holbach, "and he returns your dislike; but we should all, I think, be wrong were we to regulate our feelings by his. *So much the worse for him*, say you. Well, the more I study him, the more I am convinced that we cannot equitably accuse him, either of his faults or of his distresses. He is like a diseased person, a child"—

"A child who thinks himself the only rational person of all mankind."

"As for that, you are right. Never man, under an exterior of the greatest humility, was more imperturbably satisfied with himself. Many other people are equally so, but then it

* No historian has yet been able, notwithstanding the "Confessions," to explain clearly Rousseau's rupture with d'Holbach, and so many others.

is at least because they think themselves either good or clever. As for him, before telling you that he is the best of men, he will begin by relating a heap of villanies that he confesses, that he exaggerates, of which he accuses himself, with all the fervour of a Trappist. His life, he says, has been nothing but a lengthened tissue of mistakes; if you try to spare him a fresh one, he will resist like a man convinced that he never has committed one, and is incapable of committing one. The only way to be in his good books, at least for some days, is to give him an opportunity of playing the generous. You, Diderot, for instance, were a little less detested by him than usual yesterday. Do you know why? Duchesne, the bookseller, had sent him the *Philosophes*, in which Palissot tears you to pieces famously, and spares Rousseau in a manner that is sufficiently marked. Upon this, he manifested great indignation that he should be thought flattered at seeing himself spared at your expense. He replied to Duchesne, that he would not accept this *horrid* present; that he had had the *honour* of being your friend; that he could never take pleasure in seeing a *respectable* man calumniated.—As far as I know, Morellet, he has never said any ill of you as yet; but since he has helped to bring you out of the Bastile,* you are in his eyes the most virtuous and the most interesting of men. Render him a service, and he will immediately distrust you. Bring him out of the Bastile—if by chance he should get there—and you will be his enemy; for the greater the service, the less he will be convinced that you render it without having some concealed purpose."

"He is an incarnate paradox," said Morellet. "One is continually disposed to ask whether he is the most consummate liar or the most sincere of men."

"If sincerity consists," said Helvetius, "in being convinced

* By the interference of the Maréchale de Luxembourg.

at the time of what a man brings forward, no one, I think, can be more sincere than he; if the term is only to be applied to that kind of sincerity which begins by inquiring whether there is a permanent conviction of what is stated, then I say boldly that he is not sincere. All he says, he believes to be true; but as for asking himself why he does so, he never thinks of it. This is the reason why he has maintained with equal candour things the most contradictory; this is the reason why he furnishes weapons to all parties. His convictions, the result of mere instinct, are formed as he goes on, from page to page. They are still complete and sincere even when he is about to dispute that which he has supported. What did he do at his very first publication? You know the story. He cast his eyes by chance in the *Mercury* on a question proposed by the Academy of Dijon—'Has the progress of arts and sciences contributed to corrupt or to purify morals?'—he is at once decided to compete. He is enthusiastic; he has already sketched in his mind a magnificent picture of the benefits of civilization; he hastens to a friend, he lays before him, in great agitation, his subject, his plan. 'It is the ass's bridge,' says the friend; 'take up the opposite argument, and you will see what a fine noise it will make!' This is a fresh ray of light; and behold him attacking violently what he had at first intended to support. You were the friend, Diderot."

"It was I. As you say, hardly had I let fall the words, when he was quite as much convinced and as enthusiastic as before; quite as ready to say *black*, as he had been to say *white!*"

"But," said d'Holbach, "he has denied the adventure."

"He tells a lie!" exclaimed Diderot.

"Gently, gently," said Helvetius. "We know very well that the adventure is true. He has allowed you to tell it for ten years without thinking of contradicting you."

"And he dares"—

"Gently, I say. Is he a man with whom to be angry?"

"But if he tells a lie, we must"—

"Prove it to him? You would not succeed; remember what I told you just now. If he has come to deny the fact, it is because he no longer believes it. Lay the blame on his imagination; do not accuse his heart."

It was thus that Helvetius was in the habit of explaining Rousseau's eccentricities. Is this system applicable to all the circumstances of his life and of his writings? Perhaps. Let others decide. As to the adventure in question, we confess that it appears to us impossible to doubt it. Marmontel's *Memoirs*, Morellet's especially, who was so impartial and so serious in his old age, amply counterbalance the tardy denials of Rousseau.

The hour approached.

"Gentlemen," said Helvetius, "the stake has just been erected. We agreed, as you know, to be at table"—

Several drew near to the window.

"Not so near," resumed he, "not so near, gentlemen; one of those criers would only have to raise his eyes, and"—

"And he would see us," said Morellet. "Well, what of that?"

"What of that?—why, that you might return very quickly whence you came, my lord *Mords-les*."*

"Silence!" cried Damilaville; "the Court is going in."

"Not at all," said the abbé, "the Court is coming out."

In fact, the two councillors had just appeared at the top of the grand entrance.

"Let us sit down to table, then," said Helvetius.

They did so. Damilaville being seated nearest to the win-

* The pun was Voltaire's. The ardent abbé did his best to justify its correctness.

dow, could, even whilst eating, have his eye on all that was passing. "Attention!" said he; "they are going to begin. But here is a vacant plate; who is missing?"

"You know that Grimm always arrives last," said Marmontel.

"He must have time to run after news."

"Time to arrange his wig!"

He was indeed most particular about it.

"Time to be seen by the ladies!"

"Time not to be seen by his creditors!"

"Gentlemen," said Helvetius, raising his glass, "to the health of the Parliament!"

"To the health of the Parliament!" repeated all the guests; and they touched glasses, and the laugh and jest went round.

"Good!" said Morellet, "good!—health, *sanitas;* which means good sense as well, which I heartily wish our gentlemen of the Parliament. *Mens sana in corpore sano.*"

"What are they doing, Damilaville?"

"The crier is reading—come! he has finished the first sentence. Samson is tearing a book."

"Which?"

"Do you suppose I can read from here?"

"Is it thin, thick, small, large?"

"It is burning. Besides, it is too far off. If I had Grimm's eye-glass"—

"My eye-glass?" said Grimm. "What to do?"

"Ah! there you are at last! give him the eye-glass, and sit down."

"Let me at least have a look."

"Look, then."

"Have they burned many already?"

"They are tearing up the second."

"Try and see when my turn comes," said Helvetius.

"Yes; I see very well now.—Well! who is that priest who has just appeared on the staircase? indeed, it is our man of Versailles—it is Father Bridaine."

Everybody, at these words, had run towards the window, for the adventure at Versailles had made a prodigious noise. The eye-glass went round, that each might see him better. A hundred observations were made upon his face, his appearance, his costume.

Meanwhile the crier went on reading, and the hangman burning. Damilaville had promised to let Helvetius know. He hoped to recognise the book by its size and cover.

They related to each other, while waiting—for they had sat down to table again—the different traits, more or less authentic, that have since found a place in the biographies of Bridaine.

"One day," said Grimm, "when he was at the head of a procession, he stopped all at once, got up upon a curb-stone, and began to say, 'I am going to take you home.' They followed him; and he led them to the burial-ground."

"That is quite his way," said Raynal. "There is not a sermon of his in which he has not the art of finding out something new, something striking or extraordinary, to rouse people's attention. I have heard him often at Pézenas."

"What place is Pézenas?" said d'Holbach.

"My birthplace, sir."

"And that of your accent, probably."

"Alas!"

Raynal had often groaned over his unfortunate accent, half Gascon, half Languedocian, which had shut him out from the pulpit. To quote his own words, "*Jé né préchais pas mal*," said he, "*mais j'avais un assent dé tous lés diables.*" On what do events turn! But for this accent, he would have devoted himself to the pulpit; he would perhaps have had

great success, for he possessed all the necessary talent. Had he been born at Paris, Raynal might have become a bishop; born at Pézenas, he became an Encyclopædist.

"Nothing could be more curious," resumed he, "than the appearance of Father Bridaine at Aigues-Mortes, nearly forty years ago. The people of the place had reckoned, for their Lent sermons, on I know not what celebrated preacher. When they saw him arrive, a man of rather poor appearance, and quite unknown, they agreed not to go and hear him. On Ash-Wednesday, he got into the pulpit. There was nobody there. He took a bell and went through all the streets of the town, ringing. Soon all Aigues-Mortes was after him. He returned to the church, got into the pulpit again, and with his powerful voice, began a hymn on death. People laughed—he went on. Gradually the laugh ceased. They listened; at length they trembled, for he paraphrased his hymn, and poured forth a torrent of images, enough to alarm the most hardened. His reputation was made."

"I should not be astonished," added some one, "if Father Bridaine became, if indeed he is not already, one of those men who live in the imagination of the people, and whose history, even during their lifetime, is encumbered with traditions."

"In that case," said d'Alembert, "he would have that character in common with a man whom he surely does not suspect that he resembles—Rabaut, whom you saw at my house last week. He has been to see me again. I induced him to give me some further details respecting his position amongst his people. He is decidedly a real hero of romance for these poor people; he has continually to struggle against the honours they would wish to pay him, against the inclination they would have to assign to him all the rights of the leader of a party. If he had encouraged it in the least, he

would long ago have been one. Last year, when our great generals allowed themselves to be beaten, and in the north France could hardly defend itself, Rabaut would have had but to speak the word in order to raise all the south; and at the head of a hundred thousand men, he might have expostulated against the abominable oppression of the Protestants. There must be"—

"I think," interrupted Damilaville, "gentlemen, that we are come to it. I recognise the book. They are beginning to read the sentence."

"Pass me the eye-glass," said Helvetius. "Yes—that is it—I recognise myself."

His hand trembled. He saw that his agitation was observed. Helvetius had reckoned too much on his strength; or rather it was because he did not reckon upon it that he had done so much to divert his mind. He had acted a part. He had thought to render it easier by assuming one of insolence. In spite of himself, the mask had fallen off.

"You smile, Diderot?" said he. "Smile, if you will. I should in your place do as much. You know whether I am afraid of those fires. But there is one for whom all this is terrible—one who weeps, Diderot, while we are here laughing—that one"—

"It is his mother," was whispered.

"It is she. Because the reasons of her grief are—absurd, shall I not pity it?"

He knew that his mother had gone to pass this hour, the prospect of which had tormented her for a year past, in a church. He seemed to see her on her knees, praying for him.

They no longer smiled. Diderot alone was in ill humour. He did not comprehend why the sacred interests of philosophy should not precede, everywhere and in all things, the old

fashioned feelings of nature, and prejudices of religion. Besides, it was not the first time that he accused Helvetius of not knowing how to be bold but with the pen. He considered him, like Malesherbes and Buffon, too much the gentleman, and too rich to be a genuine philosopher; he did not like that gloved hands should set about *crushing the wretch*, and in the great work of ploughing up the ancient soil of St. Louis, he would willingly have said, parodying the words of our Lord: "He that putteth his hand to the plough, and looketh back, is not fit to enter the kingdom of Reason."

He began therefore to look again. But as nothing could be heard—"I should like to read that sentence," said he.

"Here it is," said Grimm. "I have procured a copy of it. Here is also"—

"What is this?" cried out Diderot. "Retractation that M. Helvetius has deposited at the Registry of the Court!"

"Read it," said some.

"No, no!" said others, who appeared aware of the matter, and little desirous that it should be known.

But Diderot read on:—"I have not purposed attacking any of the truths of Christianity, which I sincerely profess in all the rigour of its dogmas and morality, and to which I am proud of submitting all my thoughts, all my opinions, and all the faculties of my being, certain that all which is not conformable to its spirit can neither be conformable to the truth. These are my real sentiments. In them I have lived, I shall live, and die."

Diderot, while reading these lines, had interrupted himself two or three times, half-choked with indignation, and half-hesitating to believe that the document was authentic.* But Helvetius was seated, motionless, his eyes bent down—evidently he acknowledged it. Diderot still restrained himself,

* It is authentic. We have not altered a single word.

but he was not a man to restrain himself long. He had thrown down the paper; his lips trembled. "A retractation!" muttered he; then growing animated, "When do we expect the ancient idol to fall, then, if it has but to frown in order to make men prostrate themselves at its feet? A retractation!" then, all at once, rushing to the window, "Bravo, my lords! bravo!" cried he. "Burn on, burn on — since there are still people who are afraid of your flames."

It was at this moment that he had been seen leaning out of the window, clapping his hands, and resisting like a madman those who held him back.

The tears of his mother, the advice of pious or prudent friends, the indignation of the queen and the dauphin, had decided Helvetius upon taking this extraordinary step.

The history of the retractations thus forced from the infidelity of the last century would indeed be strange. We scarcely know which to admire most—the folly of those who exacted them, or the bad faith of those who dared sign them.

Voltaire, the foremost in the attack, was also foremost in the recantation. But he did not wait to be forced into it—it amused him to volunteer it. He thought it excellent to laugh at those whose opinions he turned into ridicule, by disavowing his sarcasms, by crying out against calumny, and by giving himself out as the best of believers. See his letters. If those in which he pretends to be a Christian were collected, they would make a volume. Did he hope to deceive? At first, perhaps; at a later period, he well knew that no one was deceived by it. But, after all, what did he care whether he was believed or not? "If I had a hundred thousand men, I know very well what I should do," he writes to the Count d'Argental; "but as I have not, I shall take the sacrament at Easter, and you may call me a hypocrite as much as you like." If he is taken ill, he confesses. If

serious threatenings are heard, he will feign sickness, in order to have an opportunity of confessing. If a stranger of high rank and piety appears desirous to have his profession of faith, he writes to him thus :*—

"The great Corneille was obliged to reply to his enemies, that he submitted all his writings to the opinion of the Church.

"I say the same thing; and I have pleasure in saying it to a senator of the second town in the States of his Holiness —still more so in saying it in a residence so near to heretics as mine is. The more I am filled with charity for them as individuals, and indulgence for their errors, the firmer I am in my faith," &c.

So spoke the master—so spoke the disciples, without the slightest scruple, provided the times were stormy, and the Bastile seemed to call for new guests. This bad faith was, however, too common to be judged too severely. Retractations of this kind were something like the forms of politeness. They had, so to speak, become a part of the language; every one knew exactly how much to subtract from them. To protest submission to the Church, was nothing more extraordinary in the eyes of the world than to style one's-self in a letter the *humble servant* of an inferior, or to present *respects* to a man generally despised. We may have seen caricatures, in which a man is represented as making excuses to his adversary on the field, and telling him with good humour that in insulting him, even by giving him a box on the ear, he had not the slightest intention of offending him. Many people did the same thing in this great duel between intoxicated reason on the one side, and degenerate religion on the other. Helvetius had just done this; and Diderot appeared a Diogenes, a man without feeling, for having been of opinion

* Letter to the Marquis Albergati Capacelli, senator at Bologna, 1760.

that when an infidel affirms he is a Christian, he tells a falsehood.

These falsehoods have not passed away with the despotism which served as an excuse for them. They are still to be met with, under a thousand different forms, in books, in newspapers, in the language and customs of the present day.

These forms may, however, be reduced to two,—the Christian and the Romanist.

The Christian falsehood is that outward varnish of Christianity which is spread in the present day over so many ideas which are more or less immoral, sentiments more or less false, theories more or less dangerous. In this, we cannot deny that a certain degree of homage is paid to the divinity, or at least to the beauty of Christianity. Very few books in the present day breathe that coarse opposition, that deep hatred, by which it was then good taste to be distinguished—always with the reserve of writing afterwards, if the gentlemen of the Parliament were angry, that "no attack against the truths of religion" had been intended. Our authors in general anticipate reproach. Instead of waiting for Christianity to be invoked against them, they themselves invoke its aid; they hasten to place under its safeguard what they would not dare to support in opposition to it. We are no longer told by an infidel writer at the head of his book, that he desires to live and die a believer; but care is taken to scatter in the course of it just enough religious terms to deceive the ignorant. And, as we have said already, the ignorant, in matters of religion, form the great majority of mankind, the cleverest and most conscientious as regards other things included.

And this constitutes the success of the second description of falsehood, as we have also already observed, that which we have called Romanist. The ignorance of the present day in matters of religion is nowhere more striking than in the

facility with which people pass, and allow others to pass, from the one to the other of these falsehoods.

If our authors have little of the Christian, it is evident that they have still less of the Romanist. If they only admit the simplest and most direct truths of Christianity as a matter of inheritance, and not by any means of conviction, how much more do they assume the right of choosing amongst those of the Church? And yet this Church, to which they in reality refuse all authority; this Church, to which they know perfectly that they do not belong, that they never will belong, to which they could not belong without *recanting* all they have written; this Church, in short, whose pretensions they know, and that they would renounce with disdain, provided she were to try to enforce them in their own case—receives a thousand little marks of homage from them: they flatter her as if they feared her, boast of her as if they respected her—in a word, authorize her to consider them as her children and champions.

Thus, we have no more those notoriously false retractations, extorted by fear; but in their stead a thousand retractations in detail, a thousand lies, which better serve the interests of the Church, because they are less glaringly false, and because the authors themselves, very frequently, do not look into them closely enough to be aware that they are telling untruths. For instance, what fine things are told us on the subject of unity! And yet, amongst those who boast of it, who give it out openly as one of the leading characteristics of a true and holy Church, how many have we who contribute to it? How many who really submit to those laws which establish the mere appearance of it? How many who would remain submissive to it, if an attempt were made to apply these laws to their own case?

True, the Church takes care not to apply them; but this

toleration proceeds in reality from the same principle as her former severity. For a long time, authors were burnt to death; and this custom, thanks to the Church, had become so incorporated with the habits of Christian nations, that even Protestants were long before they got rid of it. At a later period, only the books were burned: the author, by a few words of retractation, escaped all persecution. Finally, neither books nor their authors are burned; and the authors themselves have to fix the price they offer for their ransom. In a century of liberty this is the best and the only means of obtaining anything from them. After all, this Church—so accommodating in our day, so cruelly exacting so long as she had it in her power to be so—is the same; the velvet hand stretched out to us, is the iron hand that would have thrown us to the flames. The same principle lies beneath her present indulgence and her former severity—unity at any price. She knew very well that she did not convert the people that she burned or forced to retract in former times; she also knows that the people whom she allows to believe or to say that they are her children, are not really such. Consequently, in both cases, what she has desired above all things, is outward appearance. In spite of Christ's declaration, her kingdom is essentially of this world. This is her greatest glory, and will be her greatest punishment.

"Are you mad, Diderot?" cried out all the guests.

"Oh!" cried he in his turn, when they had forced him from the window; "so you want to make up matters with your enemies? you want to put heart into them, and show them they are very kind to burn paper only? Very good, gentlemen, very good! But I have nothing to do with it! I swear I will not have anything to do with it! Retractations! retractations!" He was already on the staircase. They tried to detain him, but it was impossible.

"Let him alone," said Helvetius. "Let his ardour cool down. I was wrong"—

"Wrong to do what?" said Grimm.

"To pour out three or four glasses of champagne for him," said Morellet. "Is not that what you were going to say?" But Helvetius remained thoughtful.

"What a noise about it!" resumed Raynal.

"And a breakfast quite broken up," added Dr. Roux, who had never left his seat.

"It is all over," said Damilaville. "The fire is out. Peace to your ashes!—What! another sentence?"

It was the one of which we have given the text. The crier, we may remember, had recovered his voice. He was very distinctly heard.

"Protestants!" said Helvetius, sorrowfully, "they do not retract!"

"Diderot would answer you," said d'Holbach, "that it is because they are neither farmers of the taxes, nor *maîtres d'hôtel* to the queen."

"He would perhaps be somewhat in the right. But no. If they do not retract, it is that they believe. We look only to man, and we retract; they look to God, and stand firm. But listen!—Books seized at Dumont's.—Fifteen hundred livres fine, of which one-third goes to the informer, *who has desired not to be named.* Good God!"

"In truth," said d'Alembert, "that sounds ill. The third of 1500 livres is 500. Exactly what your *excellent young man*, Dumont's clerk, had received from his pretended cousin. Another lesson, my dear philosopher! You have prepared this nest for a viper. What! you seem quite cast down by it? Did you think, then, that your benefits would never light but upon worthy people?"

"No; but"—he hesitated.

"But what?"

"Gentlemen," interrupted Grimm, "I forgot to tell you, speaking of Father Bridaine, that he preaches on Monday at St. Sulpice. All Paris will be there."

"And all Versailles," added Damilaville.

"Shall we go?"

"Why not?"

"Agreed. Who will take Diderot?"

"Leave it to me," said Morellet.

"Good. It is in his way, as he is of the profession."

"Of the profession? Diderot?"

They told him the adventure of the six sermons. Grimm added the story of his excursion to Meaux, and visit to the bishop.

The books were still burning. Puffs of smoke reached quite into the room. They shut the window, and resumed their conversation.

But nothing could amuse Helvetius. He listened very little, and scarcely answered. The guests went away at last, and he remained alone with d'Alembert.

"What is the matter?" said the latter. "That young man must have interested you very much, you are so afflicted at having discovered"—

"I am the guilty person, d'Alembert!"

"You?"

"This young man was a pattern of honesty a year ago; unfortunately, I lent him my book."

"Your book? But in it you preach only virtue, disinterestedness, and uprightness." Helvetius shook his head.

"Virtue! virtue! Yes, indeed, the word occurs very often in my book. It remains to be seen whether, with our principles, it can be anything more than a mere word."

"These are scruples"—

"But too well founded, d'Alembert. That young man believed in God; he believes in Him no longer."

"That is not your fault. You do not teach atheism?"

"Not quite. But it might well be asked whether God, in our systems, is really more than a word. As for me, I have often confessed to myself, while writing, that if I did speak of Him, it was—how shall I express it?—from complaisance, from politeness, in a manner. Believe me, God must necessarily be all or nothing. If it be not He who moves the car of nature, He becomes but a fifth wheel of it. Well, notwithstanding all our phrases, we reduce Him to acting the latter part. So long as people keep to the theory, they may deceive themselves; they will think, on the faith of our fine words, that they believe in God. Let the opportunity offer of acting as though they do not believe, and you see what happens."

"The gentlemen of the Parliament," said d'Alembert, "would doubtless be agreeably surprised if they knew that their sentence had given rise to such reflections on your part."

"I am not," resumed he, "one of those who think a book good, simply because it is condemned to the flames. Besides, you have just seen that it is not the sentence of the Parliament that has led me to reproach myself thus; it is the other sentence, far more conclusive, that a poor wretch has pronounced by showing me what the reading of my book has done for him. Say what you like, d'Alembert, this is a sorer punishment than all the censures and sentences in the world. If the God that we dethrone really exists, do you know what He had best do to punish us?"

"Well! what?"

"Let us live a century longer, and allow us to witness the harvest of the storms we are sowing."

CHAPTER XVI.

Let us now follow Father Bridaine to the house of the person whom the Cévenol had pointed out to him as the friend of Rabaut.

Not knowing his address, he thought he might get it from the porter at the Academy of Inscriptions. He did receive it there. His residence was Rue des Menestriers.

Court de Gebelin had been for some time past the central agent of the French Protestants. A strange kind of toleration permitted him almost to take the title officially. The Protestants, according to the terms of the last edicts of Louis XIV., were no longer rebels, whose pardon might be asked for; *they no longer existed;* their very name was banished from official acts;* and yet a man was tolerated at Paris, at Versailles, in the offices of the ministers, in drawing-rooms, everywhere, who had their complaints for ever on his lips, and their petitions in his hands.

This single fact shows how undecided and unconnected was the system of the despotism of that period. At the very moment that the Government was stained by atrocious acts of rigour in the provinces, the man who spent his life in condemning them was left at liberty in the midst of the capital. The very name of Gebelin was a protest against the barbarous laws that oppressed his co-religionists; it was but one of the

* They were called "new converts." We shall see, farther on, what this meant, and what an infernal importance had been given to this word.

surnames that had helped his father, Antoine Court, to escape from the great king's blood-hounds.

Antoine Court! Here was another of those men to whom nothing was wanting but to have shone upon another theatre, in order to rank universally amongst the celebrated characters of the period, and the regenerators of his country.

It was in 1713. Languedoc, after all the ravages of the war of the Camisards, had recently had its share of the general calamities. To the rigour of oppression had been added that of the disastrous winter of 1709. The unhappy country had been spared neither levies of troops nor enormous taxes. There had been enough to draw tears of blood from those who had seen it before the revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

That which distressed them still more was the internal state of the feeble remnant of these churches. They had no longer either organization, consistories, or pastors. War and persecution had broken up and destroyed everything. Amongst the unfortunate few who still vegetated on a soil reddened by the blood of their brethren, some rejected all hope, and looked for rest only in death; others gave themselves up to all the aberrations of a fanaticism even more fatal than persecution itself. Prophets and prophetesses, weak minds thrown off their balance by the excitement of danger, vied with each other in throwing discredit upon the inheritance of solid piety left by the Saurins, the Jurieus, and the Claudes. Disorder and absurdity threatened to destroy completely what fire and sword had left.

Such was the chaos out of which rose Antoine Court. He was not eighteen when his plans were already formed. They were, to bring together these scattered remnants; to form assistants for his work; to stir up some, and calm others. He purposed raising in the Desert the pulpit which had been overthrown in the churches; to ascend it himself, prudent

and calm, and cause religion to speak a language worthy of her; to have consistories, with their elders, deacons, and regularly appointed pastors; to revive convocations, synods—in short, the primitive Church complete, with its forms and substance, zeal and order, discipline and faith. And what others would not have dared to undertake in times of perfect peace, with the approbation and assistance of the great of the earth, he, a proscribed and persecuted man, purposed undertaking, with no other support than his faith, no other assistance than that of God.

It was thus that Antoine Court planned, and thus he accomplished his purposes. We shall not follow him into the details of this long and laborious career. Of the five pastors who had signed the report drawn up of the first synod held under his auspices, in 1717, *four** died on the scaffold a few years afterwards; but also, towards 1744, in those very places where he had had at first so much trouble in bringing together fifteen, thirty, or a hundred persons, he had the happiness of himself preaching, or of hearing Rabaut preach, to assemblies of five or eight thousand. He had been the only pastor at first; he left sixty behind him.

Enthusiasm has more than once produced more considerable results in less time; but to follow up for thirty years, step by step, a work of reorganization so difficult and so vast, through inexorable dangers, without appealing to enthusiasm —on the contrary, by repressing it at first—is a miracle of perseverance and courage such as history has few, perhaps none, on record.

In 1760, Antoine Court had just died. Worn out early by the labours of his fearful apostleship, he had gone to put himself at the head of the seminary at Lausanne, founded by him about 1725, with the assistance of some foreign powers.

* Huc, Vesson, Arnaud, and Durand.

Wake, Archbishop of Canterbury, and the celebrated Alphonse Turretin, professor at Geneva, had actively concurred in the formation of this establishment. There, the work that Louis XIV. had considered buried beneath the ruins of the schools of Saumur and Sedan, was carried on silently; there, were brought together, from all parts of the kingdom, those who felt, as Court said, called to be martyrs. It was there that his son, whom we have just seen settled at Paris, had studied; it was there that Rabaut's eldest son, afterwards known under the name of St. Etienne, was now studying, the same who was one day to ascend a different scaffold from the one his father had braved.

Court de Gebelin, the heir of these glorious traditions, had not, however, entered upon the active work of the ministry. Not but that he would have felt quite as much as another, and more than another, the call that his father required; he had joyfully received, before quitting Lausanne, the diploma which was called a commission for the gallows. But he had been distinguished, from his early youth, by talents so much above the common standard, that the most zealous hesitated to expose such a prize to the formidable chances of the Protestant apostleship. It had been felt that his post was in the centre, and that from thence he could render eminent services, and all had been unanimous in inducing him to settle there. A general circuit amongst the churches of the kingdom had made him thoroughly acquainted with their sufferings, wants, and desires. Rabaut was their bishop, and had long been such; Court their minister for ecclesiastical affairs.

Let us, then, make our way to his house in the Rue des Menestriers, as we shall have to see Bridaine enter it.

We reach his study. We might, at first sight, think we had returned to that of d'Alembert. Let us draw nearer. Never did such a mixture of study and business meet our eyes.

Court is seated before a large table, on which are piled up books of all sizes, letters in all kinds of handwriting, a vast chaos, in the midst of which you will never see him lose himself, or hesitate for an instant. Of the two sheets lying unfinished before him, one is a petition to the Count de St. Florentin,* the other a memorial to the President de Brosses. "Yes, sir," said he in the latter document, "I have found more than three hundred French words incontestably derived from the Arabic."—"Yes, my lord," said he in the former, "the individual, whose name is Fabre, has been two years at the galleys, for an action that would have been applauded by the ancients." He adds a sentence to the one, a sentence to the other; and this does not prevent his thinking, as he goes on, of this or that other work in hand, which he may perhaps go and seek hastily in a drawer, in order to change a word, to add a detail, a note. You perhaps think that those two books on which he is leaning his elbow, are there to help him in the same researches? but one of them is the "Polyglot" of Alcala, quite astonished to find itself in heretic hands; the other is that dark legend of Protestantism, the "Martyrology" of Crespin. There scarcely remain in the whole kingdom a dozen copies of it, so much has it been persecuted and burned. Here are ancient authors, open in various places; there, authors quite recent, in which his scrutinizing pencil has already made notes on many a page. This one is *Le Culte des dieux Fétiches*, by the President de Brosses; that, *L'Histoire de l'Yémen* and *La Table des rois Arabes*, by the Marquis de Bréquigny; a third, *L'Explication de la Mosaïque de Palestrine*, by the Abbé Arnaud; a fourth, the *Traité sur l'infini Mathématique*, by the Genevese Achard, judge at Berlin; a

* Minister of the king's household, and in this capacity charged with all that concerned the Protestants. The persecution was put on the list of the king's private affairs, as if it had been apprehended that he would not have all the glory of it.

fifth, a Memoir upon the Chinese, by M. de Guignes, of the Academy of Inscriptions; and an answer to this memoir, *les Doutes*, by Deshautesraies; a sixth, *La Théorie de l'impôt*, for which the author, the Marquis de Mirabeau, was at that moment imprisoned; a seventh, *L'Histoire des Perruques*, by Thiers, doctor of divinity, with quotations from the Greek and Hebrew, &c.; in a word, all that had been published during the first six months of 1760 in the way of archæological studies and learned novelties. But whilst the epoch had taken up learning as an occupation, in order to fill up, in some measure, by intellectual labours, the void which faith had left behind it in the heart, he who was, above all, a believer, in bringing his stone to the temple of learning, did so because he desired that it should be a temple consecrated to God.

He had finished writing, and rose from his seat.

"Eleven o'clock already!" said he, "and I have not yet received my letters; and Rabaut does not return." He walked up and down, with his arms folded.

"Here he is, I believe. Ah! it is you, Dumont."

"Ah! sir"—

"Well, have you been to see the fire?"

"Do not make a jest of it, sir. Do you know who informed against us? My clerk!"

"M. Helvetius's *protégé?*"

"The same."

"How did you discover it?"

"It would be too long to tell; but the fact is sure—only too sure. Besides, he confesses."

"You have dismissed him?"

"Of course—but what do we gain by that? They will have their eyes upon me."

"They have something else to do, Dumont. Besides, I

shall go and see those gentlemen; I mean to make them a little ashamed of their sentence."

"Very good!—but the fine, meanwhile? You know I have advanced it."

"The fine! of course I shall repay you—when I can. At this moment, I have not a crown left. All the funds I had were sent off a few days ago. Two hundred livres to the galleys at Toulon, two hundred to those at Marseilles, and a hundred to our prisoners at Aigues-Mortes—exactly, in all, the sum this wretch has received. How bad laws do lead to bad actions! If he had not been offered the facility of remaining concealed, would he have thought of betraying us? And this fine for his benefit! A time will come when the question will be asked, how laws so immoral could have existed, or judges who did not shrink from the immorality of putting them into execution. But, after all, thank God, they did not find much"—

"Not the quarter of what I had in my back-shop. Now, all is in the cellar. If they come back"—

"They will not come back. There remains?"

"A hundred Bibles, I believe, and eight hundred New Testaments. As for Catechisms, there are fully three thousand, besides Psalters and Prayer-books."

"Nearly as much, taken all together, as what was seized two years ago at Jean Corbière's, at Bordeaux. That was a fire, Dumont!* What is the affair of this morning after that? We are rich"—

"With a buried treasure!"

"Buried! that is indeed the term, since it is in your cellar; it must, however, be soon taken up—on all sides I am asked for books. In Guyenne, since the great *auto-da-fé* at Bordeaux, they do not know where to get them. In Bearn, in

* About six thousand volumes were burned at Bordeaux, on the 17th of April 1758.

Poitou, in Dauphiné, the pastors complain of receiving so few. At Nîmes, the dépôt will be soon exhausted. Happily, the fair at Beaucaire is at hand; all my measures are taken—in a month, Dumont, your cellar will be empty."

"God grant it!"

"God will grant it. Here, I believe, are my letters; there must be answers on this very subject."

The fair at Beaucaire had already many times come to the help of the spiritual purveyors of the Protestants of the south. In this great circulation of people and merchandise, books and pastors circulated with a little less danger. Rabaut had even taken sometimes on this occasion the designation of *dealer in fine pearls*, an innocent allusion, no doubt, to that *pearl of great price*, which the Bible has assumed as an emblem of itself. There had been, indeed, even at Beaucaire, in 1735, an *auto-da-fé* almost to be compared to that of Bordeaux; but these checks, which were rare, only served to lead to the invention of new means of conveyance.

The books generally arrived from Holland by Paris, and from Geneva by Lyons or Grenoble. There were trustworthy merchants in every town who acted as agents. It was in bales of stuffs, in boxes, or casks of goods—sometimes even without any other precaution than a thick wrapper and a false mark—that millions of volumes went from north to south, from east to west, from the brethren who were free to the brethren who were oppressed. But amidst these courageous frauds, the Protestant authorities were still watchful that nothing should be done beyond what necessity rendered lawful. A decree of the Synod of 1731 excommunicated whoever should bring in fraudulently anything else than books of devotion.

However difficult it was to procure a sufficient supply of books, it was often still more difficult to keep them. Various

edicts, renewed in 1729, had ordered the seizure and destruction of all books for the use of Protestants. They were enjoined to bring them themselves on the first demand; if not, they were subject to an *arbitrary** fine, fixed by the governor of the province.

In case of a second offence, the arbitrary fine was repeated, but was then not under a third of the offender's property, and three years of banishment besides. Every kind of informer was admitted; any parish officer or *curé* could introduce himself into houses, and make the required search. We may, therefore, reckon by millions the number of volumes destroyed in execution of these edicts; for education, the companion of the Reformation, had multiplied books in all ranks of Protestant France. That was a sad day when the old family Bible had to be given up—the book which was doubly sacred—first, because it was the Bible; and secondly, because of the remembrances associated with it! Children, their fathers, grandfathers, all, from their earliest childhood, had seen and handled it every day. It had been present, like the household gods of the ancients, at all the family joys and sorrows. According to a touching practice, the principal events of all these humble lives had been inscribed on the first or the last of its leaves, and sometimes on the margin. In such a year, on such a day, a child was born—and that child was the grandfather, the great-grandfather perhaps, of the father or the grandfather now existing; for the greater part of these Bibles were of the early days of the Reformation. Then came marriages, then baptisms, then deaths, then again births —and were all these sacred mementoes to perish at once in the flames?

* This term is in the edict of 1729, and in almost all those that relate to pecuniary penalties to be inflicted upon the Protestants. The right of confiscation, so odious already in the hands of tribunals or of the monarch, existed, in fact, in those of the most inferior officers of control.

Court had just received his letters, collected by a confidential porter. Two or three bore his address; the others had been received by various persons in Paris; for although the police appeared to close their eyes, he had judged it more prudent not to make his immense correspondence public. There were also two for Rabaut—(for *M. Tuabar*, for that, it will be remembered, was his name at Paris).

"Well, Dumont, what did I say to you?" exclaimed Court, after having opened the first that came to hand, "Look—read. This, however, does not come from a great distance; it is from my friend Delabroue, chaplain to the Dutch embassy. It is true I wrote to him yesterday."

Dumont took the letter and read:—

"'I had not waited for the receipt of your letter, dear friend and brother, to occupy myself about what you mention to me. I have written to our friends in Holland, and hope they will soon have collected the sum; but as the answer cannot be here for a few days, I have procured, as I best could, the 1500 livres, and you shall have them in the course of the day. May it please God to send us no worse trial, and all will be well.—Your friend and brother.

"'*P.S.*—I have just put the last touch to my work. The title embarrasses me a little. It will be, I believe, *The Spirit of Jesus Christ upon Toleration.* What do you think of it?'"

"I shall reflect upon it," said Court. "Meanwhile, here is your fine provided for. What! more money! But this I expected; it is the quarterly stipend of the pastors to whom the committee of Geneva allows a supplement." *

"Will that pass on to Nîmes?" said the bookseller.

"To Nîmes, to Alais, to Toulouse. I have a person who

* The stipends of the pastors at that period were seven or eight hundred francs. The sums sent from Geneva added to this three hundred and twenty.

takes charge of these remittances. He is a Genevese, of the name of Necker, a clerk in the house of Thélusson."

"The Necker who is said to be so intelligent?"

"Yes; a young man who will make his way in the world. Ah! here is what I was looking for—an excellent letter from Beaucaire. Take it; I see everything is pointed out in it. The addresses, the declarations to be made—very good. Your cellar will not only be empty in a month, Dumont—it will be empty in a week, unless we receive wherewithal to fill it again."

Dumont went away, half satisfied, half depressed. He was one of those Protestants of whom we have seen that there were many in the large towns, thoroughly Protestant at heart, but very little desirous to commit themselves. Shall we throw the first stone at them? Let us remember the difficulties of their situation. The slightest infringement of the edicts might be followed by terrible punishments. It was a favour that the Parliament had not condemned Dumont to close his shop; and had they wished to send him to the galleys, they might easily have found in these very edicts, more than one article to which he could have had nothing to reply. Had not William Issoire, of Nîmes, been sent thither for having received casks labelled *black and white rosin*, which had been found full of Ostervald's Catechisms? besides, Dumont passed for a Romanist. The forced abjuration of his father had transmitted the title to him, which he kept like so many others, because he needed it to gain his livelihood. If this was hypocrisy, whose fault was it?—that of the unhappy beings who submitted to it as a disgrace, or of those who made it necessary for them?

Left alone, Court resumed his letters. He had a sort of register before him, in which he entered, as he proceeded, what he wished not to forget.

"'To write to M. de Voltaire, in order that he may interest himself for Chaumont of Geneva, condemned for life to the galleys, by M. de Saint-Priest, commissioner of Languedoc, for having attended religious assemblies.'*

"'To see what has become of the petition of John Besson of Alais, to the effect that he be permitted to sell his house for 4500 livres to Mark Ducros, of the same place.'†

"'To answer the Abbé Barthélemy, that I will go and see him one of these days; that if I can help him to decipher the inscription, I shall do so willingly; that the word in question is not in the Polyglot, &c.'

"'To write to Lausanne, that the pastor, Campredon, cannot remain alone in Normandy; that one or two colleagues must absolutely be found for him.'‡

"To send to M. de Quesnay,§ the beginning of my calculations on the price of corn at Rome at the end of the reign of Augustus.'

"Ah! ha!" murmured he, as he opened the last letter, "here is the Abbé Caveirac renewing the attack;‖ he is repenting of having been too good-natured."

"Come, come," pursued he, addressing Rabaut, whose step he heard in an adjoining room; "come and see how far the *fides romana* can go."

Rabaut came in—"What is it?" said he.

"A paper of the Abbé Caveirac's, which is announced to

* Chaumont, on whose behalf Voltaire wrote to the Duke de Choiseul, was only set at liberty in 1764.

† The Protestants could not dispose of more than three thousand francs' worth of landed property. Emigration was impossible for landed proprietors, unless they abandoned everything.

‡ The churches of Normandy had only been reorganized about the year 1744, by the pastor, Viala.

§ The political economist.

‖ He had published, in 1755, in answer to the Memoir of Rippert de Monclar, a "Dissertation sur la Tolérance des Protestants en France;" two years afterwards he had added an "Apologie de Louis XIV., et de son Conseil."

me, in which he pretends to prove that scarcely a thousand persons were killed in Paris on St. Bartholomew's day."

"A thousand! my dear friend, he is very moderate indeed. People have maintained to me, that there were not five hundred; and at the utmost, two or three thousand throughout the whole kingdom."

"They must be mad, then! By whom do they suppose they will be believed?"

"By whom? my poor friend, it is easy to see that you live amongst the learned only. They will be believed by all who are interested in believing them; and the learned will believe them too, at last. Has it not already been affirmed in some histories, that the St. Bartholomew massacre was merely a political affair, a mere game in which the Protestants had the ill luck not to be the strongest and the most cunning? The excuse comes rather late; it would be but too strange that the Church of Rome should have bowed her head for nearly two hundred years, under the infamy of such a remembrance, if she had thought to possess any means of throwing it off. But now, the way is open; that Massacre, fifty years hence, will be nothing but a mere rising of the people, wickedly exaggerated by us; a hundred years hence, it will have become a pure calumny against good mother Church."*

"Probably—and doubtless all that our children will tell of our present sufferings will be calumny."

"Yes," resumed Rabaut, "if I had not a thousand other

* Bossuet estimates the number killed in Paris, of whom 500 at least were persons of rank, at 6000; and those killed in the provinces at 25,000 or 30,000. "The news of the massacre excited horror everywhere," he adds; "hatred of heresy caused it to be well received at Rome." He denies that there was any conspiracy on the side of the Protestants. "In order to impress the idea of conspiracy yet more on the public mind," says he, "public thanksgivings were offered to God for the pretended discovery. This farce imposed on no one, and the action just committed, was the more detested by the good, that no shadow of pretext could be found for it." Bossuet was, as may be seen, much less anti-Protestant than certain writers and preachers of the present day.

reasons for being convinced that the Church of Rome teaches error, her condemnation, in my eyes, would be manifest from this fearful facility of lying. Not a month, not a week passes, but I have to take up my pen against the most absurd falsehoods; and it is not only priests and monks that circulate them—bishops, whose position, if not their conscience, should render them more circumspect, are all the bolder, as if they felt themselves too elevated to be reached by our contradictions. After your father had replied so well in 1752 to the famous letter* in which the Bishop of Agen, M. de Chabannes, accused us of rejoicing in the misfortunes of France, it might have been hoped that that accusation should never have again come to light. Well, not a charge against us is published in our part of the country, without reproducing or insinuating it; and this assertion, if it is false, at least is not founded on an absurd supposition, for there would be nothing strange in our loving but little a country where we have suffered so much; but how many other accusations, purely and impudently false, are invariably repeated in the writings of these men! One only, the Bishop of Nîmes,† is an exception, and even he distinguished himself in a melancholy way, in 1752, at the time of rebaptizing by wholesale. We have M. de Montclus, Bishop of Alais, who picks up the most infamous stories that have been related of Luther and Calvin, and all our Reformers; or M. de St.-Jal, Bishop of Castres, who accuses us of undermining the foundations of morality, and of authorizing debauchery and adultery; or M. de Fontanges, Bishop of Lavaur, who shows us as holding out our hand to the infidel and the irreligious; or M. de Crussol-d'Uzès, Bishop of La Rochelle, who thinks himself a great theologian, and yet cannot put together a sentence against our dogmas, without seasoning it with

* Letter to the comptroller-general, M. de Machault, "Against the toleration of the Huguenots in the kingdom." It was on this occasion that Antoine Court published his "Patriote français et impartial."

† M. de Becdelièvre.

some falsehood against us. So much for written lies; elsewhere, it is still worse. In the pulpit, in the confessional, in schools, in families, everywhere that we cannot follow our enemies step by step, the most absurd prejudices are sown and perpetuated. It is not the fault of certain priests, if the people amongst whom we live—who can see us, question us every day,—in short, who have but to open their eyes to know what we are—do not look upon us as a species of monsters, scarcely belonging to the human kind."

Did he exaggerate? or would this picture, which was true in 1760, be false in the present day? It would, doubtless, in some points, principally in one. It was for the interest of the throne that the Church, if she was to be believed, demanded the destruction of the Protestants. There was not a memorial, or an episcopal charge published, in which their liberal ideas were not represented as calculated to draw down upon them the severity of the royal authority especially.

This is a resource closed against their accusers in our day. It would be opened again, we doubt not, the day that a Louis XIV. or a Louis XV. should come back; meanwhile, men vie with each other in playing the democrat. The Protestants are therefore permitted the love of liberty, by their former oppressors. With this exception, the old accusations take their course; some just the same as in days gone by, others somewhat modernized, all, or almost all, as audacious as ever.

"But let that alone," resumed the minister. "I am just come from the Palace of Justice. I have seen burnt—you know what. I longed to be with some one who could understand my feelings at witnessing that sight."

"Look here," said Court; "while the fire was kindling, another book was brought to me, which they will perhaps burn likewise, but which will nevertheless be an everlasting witness against their Church and themselves. Here is the

first copy of the history that my father promised us so long,* the last pages of which he only finished some days before his death. A precious manuscript is left me, that of the *General History of the Protestants of France, in their different places of refuge, after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes;* it contains a multitude of details that he alone could be acquainted with, and which will be of the deepest interest to all those families that have been broken up by exile. Unfortunately, there are but notes, and between notes and a book there is a vast difference. I shall write that book if God spares my life.† It will be the labour of my old age."

"One more! You alarm me, Gebelin, with your projects. —Man appoints"—

"And God disappoints; I know it. But God does not forbid our *appointing;* above all, when it is for His glory."

"And who tells us when it is really for His glory? Can we ever clearly know if it is of Him we are thinking? I own I tremble for you when I see you in the midst of such a turmoil. Reputation and fortune stand at your door."

"Let them come in, Rabaut, and we shall see—I, too, sometimes tremble—I, too, fear lest I should forget God for myself."

* "History of the Troubles in the Cevennes," by Antoine Court.

† This work was never executed, and the MS. was lost at Court's death. The following article has just appeared in a periodical published in Geneva, entitled, "La Semaine Religieuse." "A discovery of the greatest importance to the history of the Reformed Churches of France has just been made in the public library of Geneva, by a gentleman from Paris, of learning and literary attainments—Mr. Eugène Haag. It is that of the manuscript of the History of the French Protestants, in their various places of refuge, written about a century ago, by the pastor, Antoine Court. As is well known, Court was one of the men whose faith and energy contributed the most to maintain Protestantism in France during the reign of Louis XV., at a time when all legal existence was denied it, and when the leaders of the Reformed Churches were either proscribed or punished with death. Court published, in 1760, *l'Histoire des Camisards*: but he had not time to bring out his more extensive work, *l'Histoire du Réfuge*. In 1784, after the death of Court de Gebelin, son of Antoine Court, the unpublished manuscript of this work was lost; and from that time no further trace of it remained. In the most unexpected manner, it has been found amongst other papers, deposited at a later period in the library of Geneva.—*Trans.*

"Take courage, then! that is a sign that you will not forget Him."

"God grant it! But before I tremble for the result, let me tremble a little for the work itself. I have just drawn up the plan of that immense work, of which I have sometimes spoken to you in my letters—there will be twenty volumes, thirty, perhaps."

"And the title will be"—

"Le Monde Primitif, analysé et comparé avec le Monde Moderne"—(The Ancient World analysed and compared with the Modern World).

"Let us see your plan."

"In the first volume, I follow out, in Greece and in the East, the generating principles of ancient religions, through every kind of allegory. The second is a universal grammar, followed by the theoretic explanation of the systems that I have used in the study of languages. In the third, which I think I shall entitle, 'The History of Language,' I treat the great question of the origin of language. The fourth, 'History of the Calendar,' will comprise all that relates to the division of time, astronomical observations, chronologies, &c. The fifth is an etymological dictionary of our own language. The sixth and seventh, an etymological dictionary of the Latin language. The eighth, a collection of general observations on all that has gone before. The ninth, an etymological dictionary of the Greek language. The tenth"—

"Enough! enough!" interrupted Rabaut. "You not only frighten me, you overwhelm me. It would require twenty men to accomplish all that."

Gebelin laughed.—"You say twenty men? I begin to take courage. M. d'Alembert declares that it would require forty.* Let me try, and we shall see that one will be quite

* Authentic.

sufficient. Do you see this manuscript? It is a dissertation in which I show that the Languedocian is anterior to the invasion of the Visigoths. I give the etymology of more than twelve hundred words in that language, of which about two hundred are Greek, six hundred Celtic, the rest Latin or Oriental. There are more than a hundred pages there, and large as you see. How much time do you think I spent upon it?

"A month?"

"Six days; and I was very far from having nothing else to do."

"Your materials were ready. You only arranged and wrote them down."

"Not at all. I did not know at the beginning the tenth part of what I discovered or imagined as I went on. Lately, at the Marquis of Aubais's, an old Bible was brought to me, in the language of the Grisons, which I had never studied in my life; and there I was, drawing up, on the spot, I know not how many observations on that idiom, its origin, history, &c. When I began to study the Anglo-Saxon books of the Venerable Bede, I had only to apply my key to them, and I read them like French."

"I know well you do not study; you devour; but"—

"But here is a great deal of pride, you were going to say. There is some—yes, I feel it—but less than you seem to fear. Would I give all these details to another but you? I have spoken to you as to a second self. If I reach the aim I wish, to God, to God alone, be the glory! But either I shall die on the way, or I shall reach it."*

* Only the nine first volumes appeared; but the author's manuscript at his death in 1784, filled more than fifty portfolios, folio size. The letters and papers relating to Protestant affairs, formed, according to the testimony of Rabaut, a still more considerable mass. All has been lost. [The Société Historique du Protestantisme Français, founded in 1852, has succeeded in tracing some of these lost documents, &c.—*Trans.*]

"Gebelin, you may say what you please, but I do not approve of these gigantic projects; I cannot help seeing in them something like a challenge thrown out against Providence. Take care. God forbids covetousness; and science is likewise a species of riches. All that destroys the miser who heaps up gold, pride, avidity, attachment to the things of earth—do not you know that they may be felt by him who heaps up knowledge? But, forgive me, dear brother, forgive me! You do not need my counsel."

"Not need it! Oh! rather would that I had you constantly at my side! You would compel me to be wiser; besides, you would give my labours a more practical direction. You would teach me to do a little less for the learned, and a little more for men in general. We should resume our project of a translation of the Bible."

"Do you give it up entirely?"

"I began very recently to translate some Psalms."

"God be praised! But shall you continue?"

"I was alarmed—I, who am seldom alarmed, not at the labour, but at the responsibility. I have done enough, however, to convince me how far we are as yet from being able to say that the Old Testament is translated. But of all the versions I have had before my eyes, the worst is decidedly the Vulgate. And to think that in their Council of Trent they have dared to declare it authentic and unassailable! I have made poor Abbé Arnaud pass some unpleasant hours on account of that unfortunate decree. I showed him, that in the twenty-second psalm alone, such as his Church sings it, there are two or three passages where the meaning is quite contrary to the true one; he was obliged to allow it. He asked me if our translators had never made any like mistakes. I answered, that our translators are men, and that we have never declared them infallible. You should have seen him then, trying to

prove how that the Church, by declaring the Vulgate authentic, and forbidding its being rejected, did not mean to proclaim its infallibility. 'But,' said I, 'supposing that to be the case, the decree of the Council would be only the more extraordinary. What! acknowledge that the Vulgate has faults, and declare that it must be used for ever and always, as if it had none!' He was on thorns; I thought it best to laugh—'Confess,' said I, 'that it is a hard task to be at the same time both a learned man and a Romanist!' Another question, upon which I have almost brought him to acknowledge himself rebellious to the Council of Trent, is that of the Apocrypha. He allows—and how could he deny it?—that neither the Jews, nor the Fathers, nor the Doctors, nor the Church herself, before this Council, ever put these books on the same footing with the others. The whole question, then, is, to ascertain whether the Council, after such precedents, could have the right of putting them there. He tries to prove it. I then ask him, whether, in his heart and conscience, he believes the decree good and correct; and as, after what he has just allowed, he could not venture to maintain it—'See, then,' I say to him, 'to what you are reduced! This decree—by which the Church gives you as authentic, as sacred, writings hitherto unauthentic—you do not believe any more than I do; you confine yourself to maintaining that the Church had a right to make it; or, in other terms, a right to decree error. Is that submission? Is that being a Romanist?'"

"I have seen few people," said Rabaut, "who were Romanists otherwise. They grant the Church, in theory, as many rights as she chooses; but to believe, in reality, all she teaches, is quite another thing. I, too, have sometimes amused myself by condemning people in the name of the Council of Trent, who professed and believed themselves Romanists; thanks to

the care which had been taken to conceal many an article from them, which would have made them reject the rest. All this would be amusing enough, if the champions of the Church of Rome were reduced to these poor shifts as their only arms; but the nearer you are to making them confess that they are not Romanists, the more they will show you by their animosity and violence, that they are only too much so. They persecute us, in short, much less because they are good Romanists than because they fear not to be so; we have no greater enemies than those who are obliged to harden themselves the most against our arguments, and it would seem as if every one chose the very points on which we embarrass him the most, to impute to us as crimes. The priests, for instance, without being by any means equal to the Abbé Arnaud, all know, doubtless, more or less, what you were saying just now on the subject of the Apocrypha, and yet, to hear them speak, one of their chief complaints against us, one of the principal sources of their indignation, is that we have, say they, mutilated the Bible by taking from it those books."

"It is well," added Gebelin, "if they do not turn into ridicule the somewhat antiquated language of our old versions and of our psalms, as if we were further removed from the French of Pascal and Racine than they themselves are from the Latin of Virgil and Cicero! And yet we come before the great models; they made their abominable Latin after Virgil, after Cicero. It would seem that the Abbé de Caveirac, in the midst of his atrocious calculations on the St. Bartholomew, finds means besides to let fly some arrows at us on that head. I shall send this letter to Delabroue. He will get the work, and as he has already broken a lance more than once with the author—But I forgot; there are also two letters for you. Here they are."

"This—what is the seal!"

"Let me see. Richelieu's arms!"

Rabaut opened it, not without some emotion.

He was invited to be at Versailles the day after the next. The letter was signed by one of the Marshal's secretaries.

"God be praised!" said he. "The petition has been read."

"By the king?"

"The letter does not say so; but"—

"If it does not, do not be too sure of it."

"I shall see the Duke—that is something."

"Perhaps a great deal—perhaps nothing. There is enough to make one shudder, my poor friend, when one thinks on what may hang, in those unfortunate courts, the fate of a thousand, of a million of human beings; for it is often all one to those who have to decide upon it. A moment of good or bad humour, a chance, a mere nothing, a word that may please or displease in a petition of twenty pages—and either an iniquity may be put a stop to, or may continue for a hundred years longer!"

"Here is something which comes but too much to the support of your assertion, I think," said Rabaut, as he broke the seal of the second letter. "Exactly! I recognised the writing. Look! *Marie Durand, prisoner of Jesus Christ at the Tower of Constance.*"

"Did she know you were at Paris?"

"No: she writes to Nîmes. It is from thence that her letter has been sent to me."

"Is she not the oldest of our poor sisters at Aigues-Mortes?"

"Anne Gaussaint, of Sommières, has been there for thirty-seven years; five others for more than thirty. Marie Durand only entered the Tower in 1732, the year that her brother the minister was executed at Montpellier."

"Eight-and-twenty, thirty, seven-and-thirty years of im-

prisonment for poor women, because they were seen praying to God otherwise than the king, or the king's confessor, chose! The heathen were more humane; they sent people to death at once."

"More humane, indeed, and, above all, more excusable; because there was a deadly strife between their gods and the God of the Christians."

"Could it be ascertained about how many prisoners we have?"

"At Aigues-Mortes, nineteen."

"I know; but elsewhere?"

"Elsewhere! the number cannot be fixed! There are some in all the convents of the south. Many may be dead without its being known; many, of whom we have lost sight, doubtless are still alive. It is terrible, Gebelin, even to pass by those gloomy abodes, silent as the grave, where these women, who have been torn from their husbands, their children, and their parents, are slowly wearing out their lives!* The cases of abduction are less frequent than we have seen them at other periods; but the edicts exist, the threats continue, the sword hangs no less over our heads! When a family is assembled, its members never can say but that it may be for the last time. Very lately, during a season of truce, which we began to hope might be prolonged, the Tower of Constance received two fresh captives. One was Bruyn's mother: she was taken returning from an assembly; her husband was sent to Toulon, and she to Aigues-Mortes. The other was quite a young woman, Margaret Robert, arrested by order of Marshal Thomond, governor of Guyenne. What had

* "It is just, sir, that the local authorities should be paid for the journeys made in order to arrest and convey the daughters of the Protestants to the houses appointed for their education. When the parents are really unable to pay these expenses, I shall take the measures necessary to meet them."—Despatch of M. de St. Florentin to the Commissioner at Rouen.—*July* 10, 1751.

she done? nothing more than thousands of others; she had refused to be married by a priest, and it was I who united them. It was thought expedient to make an example; and the first who came to hand was taken, or rather one was chosen who was young, beautiful, and interesting, in order that her misfortune might have a more painful publicity. Her husband, Vincent d'Uzès, who has been left at liberty, is almost mad with despair."

"He has written to me," said Gebelin, "to entreat me to interest myself in her behalf. I have left no stone unturned, but in vain. The pardon of a criminal, condemned by the courts of justice, is more easily obtained here than that of a Protestant under sentence of one of those condemnations that fall upon us by chance, and without form of trial. Our tyrants fear, and reasonably enough, that by mitigating the sentence they may appear to admit its injustice; they prefer consigning to oblivion a man at the galleys, or a woman in the depths of a prison, to acknowledging publicly why they were put there, or why left there." *

"We have had a melancholy proof of it," added Rabaut, "in the instance of one of these poor women, Jeanne Guingues. She had a son in the army. This son was killed at Fontenoy, in 1745. Amidst the transports of joy excited throughout the kingdom by the victory, we thought the moment propitious for soliciting the liberation of the mother. It was refused. Eight or ten years afterwards, the eldest of

* "It is now a long while, sir, since you gave me a good report of the conduct of the individual named Serres, detained for twenty years past at the fort of Brescou, for having married the sister of a preacher. The king purposes granting him his freedom."—Despatch of M. de St. Florentin to the Commissioner of Languedoc. (Lenain d'Asfeld.) It may easily be understood that the government was little disposed to grant pardons which recalled similar condemnations; thus the sentence of liberation intimated that the criminal had testified an earnest repentance for his crime. Often, likewise, for fear the pardon should appear to declare his innocence, certain restrictions were added. Thus this same Serres, on leaving the fort of Brescou, was banished from Languedoc.

her grandsons was killed in the service. There were fresh solicitations and fresh refusals; and she is still at Aigues-Mortes! Marie Durand, like the greater part of her companions, had ended by forgetting freedom; for a long time, her letters only expressed entire resignation. It appears that friends have given her some hope, and now she is thoroughly unhappy. She writes continually to entreat me to exert myself in her favour. Again, in this letter, see—'In the name of Divine mercy, do everything in your power to rescue us from our terrible sepulchre.' Poor woman! What can I do? what can we do?"

"What can we do, indeed, when those we have to solicit on their behalf are not at liberty to yield to our solicitations? In all the steps that I have taken for our prisoners, I have never yet seen any one, from the Duke de Choiseul down to the humblest clerk, who did not receive me well, and appear interested in their fate. At first, I went away full of hope after each visit; I was astonished to have succeeded so well and so quickly. But days and months passed away, and the pardon never arrived. You have seen the governor himself, the Duke de Fitz-James, solicit, not two years ago, the liberation of the captives of Aigues-Mortes, and unable to obtain it. The reason is, that in these affairs, every one—governors, intendants, ministers, the king himself—are but jailers for the Church, and the Church is inexorable. I am convinced that the Count de St. Florentin, the man who for forty years past has been the instrument of all our sufferings, is perpetually contending with the bishops. It has been proved to me by documents. There has not been one act of rigour that the bishops would not have wished more complete or greater; not a mitigation respecting which they have not manifested displeasure, as though it had been treachery towards them and the Church. M. de St. Florentin tells all who will listen to

him, that his archives would throw a strange light on this subject. Let them keep these archives carefully; for should persecution be out of fashion one of these days, the clergy of France will not fail to throw all the odium on the Government. In some histories, has it not already been attempted to make the Inquisition a mere secular tribunal, an entirely political institution, for the horrors of which, consequently, the Church ought not to be blamed?"

They were at this point of their conversation when Father Bridaine was announced.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

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THE KING SUBDUED.—P. 94

FRANCE BEFORE THE REVOLUTION

OR

PRIESTS, INFIDELS, AND HUGUENOTS

IN THE REIGN OF LOUIS XV.

BY L. F. BUNGENER,

AUTHOR OF "THE HISTORY OF THE COUNCIL OF TRENT," ETC.

AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION.

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FRANCE BEFORE THE REVOLUTION.

CHAPTER I.

Court and Rabaut looked at each other in astonishment. Court could not at all understand the object of this visit from a man whom he knew only by reputation. Rabaut wished to go away, intending to appear afterwards. All things considered, he remained.

"I was not mistaken," said the missionary, on perceiving him. "It was you that I was seeking, sir; I only came to inquire of your friend your place of residence.—But you were conversing, gentlemen; I have interrupted you."

"An agreeable interruption," said Gebelin, "since it procures me the honour"—

Bridaine bowed.

"We have not met again," resumed he, addressing Rabaut, "since Versailles."

"Do you think so?" said Rabaut. "Shall I tell you where you were an hour ago?"

"Have you seen Bruyn?"

"Bruyn? I do not know where he is. But I saw you in the court of the Palace of Justice. You were present—at all

that was done there. You picked up two leaves half-burnt; you looked at them—with an expression"—

"Yes," said Bridaine, with some embarrassment. "But how came I to be there?"

"I saw you; I know nothing further."

"I had just visited, in his dungeon, the man whom you saw at Meaux, at the door of a church. He was recognised and arrested. He may be executed very soon. He wishes to see you."

"I shall go to him. Shall I be admitted?"

"I will procure for you the necessary authorization."

Rabaut believed the Cévenol to be guilty of the attempt to assassinate the Colonel. Bridaine did not think proper to correct his mistake, nor to speak to him of the steps he was going to take to try and save Bruyn.

They sat down. Bridaine would have preferred being alone with Rabaut; Rabaut, with Bridaine. An astonishing degree of communion had arisen between these two minds. They felt mutually elevated enough to join hands across the barriers raised between the two Churches.

The conversation, in the absence of more interesting subjects, turned upon Gebelin's labours. Bridaine had heard much of them. Rabaut, as a friend and as a Protestant, was proud of them; he did not rest till the learned man had laid before the missionary, as he had just done before him, the plan of his gigantic work. Bridaine was amazed at it. Practical men are apt to be more alarmed than others at the great labours of the study.

"Well," said the minister, "all Benedictines do not wear the garb of St. Benedict, do they?"

"I did not think that amidst the engagements of the world, there were men so worthy of wearing it."

"The engagements of the world," resumed Rabaut, "only

injure those who are absorbed by them. In a mind naturally strong and active, they give rise to a struggle in which it can but gain strength, resources, and increased activity. To a man of such a mind, the thought of the time lost is but a stimulus to employ well what is left. He is as eager to work as others are to enjoy themselves. He does more, in a few hours perhaps, than a studious man who has all his time at his command, and is never interrupted, never excited."

Bridaine smiled. "Is that observation levelled against monasteries?" said he.

"I was not thinking of them," said the minister; "but if I had thought of them, should I have been in the wrong? Have we had fewer learned men without the cloister than you with it? And even, not to speak of another Church than your own, have you not had learned men enough who were not cloistered?"

"It was not to form learned men that monasteries were founded."

"I am aware of it; never was science less thought of than in the ages when the greatest number of them were founded. But that does not prevent the services they may have rendered in this respect from being generally brought forward in our day, as a powerful argument in their favour. It is to this argument that my observation might furnish a reply."

"Is it not in monasteries that all the standard works of ancient literature have been preserved?"

"Yes," said Gebelin; "but in what way? I have made some researches, the result of which has struck me, so little is it in accordance with what I was accustomed to hear alleged by your Church. In the first place, for a benefit to deserve gratitude, the benefactor must have intended to render a service; at least, he must not have rendered it quite unconsciously. Were the monks the least conscious in this matter

of what future ages would owe them? Could many be cited who, when taking care of Virgil, Cicero, and Tacitus for us, knew what they were taking care of? The best proof that they did not, is the condition in which they have handed down these manuscripts to us; and, still more, the fearful number that they have spoiled or allowed to be lost. What they restored to us at the revival of letters, was not the thousandth part of what they ought to have kept, and might have kept. And how many works have been entirely lost! How many authors whose names alone remain to us! How many first-rate works of which only three or four manuscripts, sometimes only one, has been found in all Europe; which has been the case, for instance, with Phædrus, amongst others discovered at St. Bénoît-sur-Loire; and even it might have remained there buried for ever, had it not been for the pillage of the abbey in 1562. We have not even Cicero complete, although one of those the least ill treated in the oblivion of a thousand years."

"I already pointed out," said Bridaine, "that monasteries were not established to serve as libraries. Perhaps, indeed, the argument to which you reply, has been abused. Nevertheless, the fact remains; without monasteries, where could you, who are such a lover of antiquity, have gone to seek for it?"

"Without monasteries, sir, that is to say, without the system of which monasteries were one of the consequences, I think we could have done without people to take care of books, seeing they would never have run the risk of being lost. The history of the decline of learning may, it appears to me, be divided into three periods. In the first, the Church assumed gradually the monopoly of learning; in the second, having day by day less to do in order to remain above the intellectual level of mankind, she sank into ignorance; in the third, she ends by finding herself inferior, if not to mankind

at large, at least to that portion of mankind which has begun once more to think and investigate: it is from without, from her enemies, that intellectual and literary life will return to her. You speak of the Benedictines. They were the first, I know, to form an exception; but their greatest works are posterior to the Reformation; and I could show you traces of this great revival at every page. And what had the Reformation to do, in order to give the signal for such multiplied labours, in order to put into activity all the intellectual power in the opposite camp as well as in its own? Very little, almost nothing. An old book was brought out of the dust; this dust was that which your Church had allowed to cover it, and then decreed that it should remain covered by it for ever. Hardly had this book seen the light, when everything in the world of ideas seemed only to exist by and for it. Printing was proud to serve it; all the sciences, all the arts converged towards it. Doctrines, which you may consider false, but of which you cannot deny the immense renovating power, flowed from those pages so long and so obstinately veiled. With this book in their hand, a few men were found strong enough to resist all the powers of Europe; learned against all her science, invincible against all those who represented the past—which had received its death-blow, from the pope to the emperor, and the magistrate to the executioner."

"Might I not," said Bridaine, "give the opposite side of all this? I should then say, that it is not the first time that God has allowed evil to gain the victory. Is emancipation always a benefit? The fruit that the first man plucked in the earthly paradise was delicious also—and yet it was forbidden fruit."

"Forbidden by God; and on that account, and that account only, his action was a crime."

"I understand. You are going to say, that the study of

the Bible has not been forbidden by Him, but by the Church. But the voice of the Church is to us the voice of God."

"Even when she orders the contrary to what God has ordered?"

"It would be necessary to prove, first of all, that this contradiction exists."

"Let us stop there. I have not, indeed, courage to enter upon the demonstration that you demand. When a Romanist has the sincerity to accept the combat on Bible ground, it is then I who feel tempted to refuse; my adversary appears to me by this single fact, so little a Romanist, that I should fear, by exciting him, to bring him to be more so. I like better to refer him simply to the inspired volume that he consents to take as arbitrator; at the utmost, I venture to point out to him two or three questions that I should wish him to put to himself seriously, in presence of this same book, between God and his conscience."

"And these questions are?"

"Do you wish to have them? This, then, is the first: Are there none of the doctrines taught by the Church at which I myself should never have arrived, nor would any one else, if I had had no other guide than the Bible? Should I, for instance, have found out the mass, confession, purgatory, the worship of saints? Should I have seen in the Bible, in particular, either the prohibition to read it, or something at least which should have led me to believe the future possibility of such a prohibition? That is the first question."

"In my turn," said Bridaine—

"Allow me to proceed. My three questions are so connected, that I must beg you above all to listen to me to the end."

"Tet us hear them."

"The second is this: Amongst those things that I

should not have found in the Scriptures, how many are there that the Scriptures appear to me really to teach or to authorize, and that I think it possible to prove from Scripture? Finally, this is the third: I have, it is true, another source to go to—tradition; but can I seriously believe that doctrines so important in theory, so universally applicable in practice, would have been omitted or thus vaguely pointed out in the Scriptures? Can I think, to keep to the same points, that the mass, confession, purgatory, those things which occupy such a place in my religion, in my life, in the books that I read or write, in the sermons that I hear or preach—can I think, I repeat, that if God had intended to teach them to us, there would have been no formal mention of them in all the New Testament? The apostles, it is true, spoke more than they wrote; but can I imagine them to have written two or three hundred pages, nay—twenty, ten pages, without bringing forward clearly one of those points that Protestants have denied? Is not the single fact, that there can be a doubt or dispute on subjects of such importance, a powerful argument against them?"

"This is," pursued Gebelin, "what I could wish all your sincere, well-informed, and pious men to ask themselves: this is the examination that I could wish to see you yourself make one day"—

"And who tells you that I have not made it?" interrupted the missionary.

"Who tells me? the fact that you are still a Romanist, still a priest—What? can you have weighed, seriously weighed what the Scripture says, or rather what it does not say, on the subject of the mass, confession, purgatory—and yet have continued to say mass, to receive confession, to speak to souls of purgatory! You have seen that the Virgin is scarcely named in the Gospels, entirely forgotten in the Epistles—and

yet have persisted in recommending her worship, as having begun in the early days of the Church, as established under the direction of God and His apostles! You have found in the Bible a hundred invitations to read it, a hundred things that exclude the idea of any kind of restriction to these invitations; you have seen that the Fathers advise, recommend, and universally enjoin the reading of it, and you prohibit it!"

"I! never."

"Never? Then I have nothing further to say; it is a matter between you and your Church. Her voice, you said, is the voice of God. If God ordered me to take away the Bible from my brethren, I should take care not to leave it to them."

"And I too—if the Church had absolutely forbidden it. Does not the Council of Trent authorize us to allow those to read it, whom we shall consider fit to profit by it?"

"Let every one read it, then; for if there is one thing that the Fathers appear to have desired to settle thoroughly, it is precisely this, that the Scriptures were made for all, good for all, necessary to all."

"Other times require other rules."

"Doubtless; but here it would be necessary to forget how the rule has arisen. It came too late; it was when the Bible, which had been lost, and was found again, threatened the institutions, the dogmas, the very existence of your Church, that you set about forbidding it. In the twelfth, in the thirteenth centuries, when it was less read than ever, there had, notwithstanding, been as yet no prohibition against reading it. In the sixteenth, when it fell by chance into the hands of Luther, Luther, in studying it, as yet violated no law. Then came the Council—and the prohibition was made; a bold but dangerous avowal of what we have repeated for two centuries past, namely, that you cannot stand before the Bible, and that

there will for ever be a deadly strife between you and it. You *permit* those to read it whom you consider fit to profit by it, say you; but if all your colleagues, which is not the case, were to do as much—if, on the contrary, there was not a very great number who do not themselves know the Scriptures—is it enough to *permit?* What should you think of a priest who permitted people to attend mass, permitted them to confess, permitted them to take the communion? What would the Augustines, the Jeromes, the Chrysostoms have thought of a priest who in their day had confined himself to permitting what they recommended—and that with such warmth, to the ignorant as well as to the learned, to the poor as well as the rich? Other times require other laws, did you say? I know that these Fathers sometimes complained of the errors to which this liberty gave rise; but what did they conclude thence? That it must be taken away from Christians? No; the only remedy that they saw for the inconveniences attendant on the reading of the Bible was a more frequent and more attentive reading of it. On the other hand, nothing can be more embarrassing for an advocate of your Church, than the very nature of the errors of which they complained. Amongst those heresiarchs, who might be reckoned by hundreds, and who went so deeply into all the questions of discipline and dogma—how comes it that not one should have attacked what our Reformers attacked? Why do we not see those who carried independence so far as to admit of no restraint, no rule of any kind, attacking confession? Why do we not see those who would have no clergy, attacking the Pope? Why do those who would have no ceremony in public worship, not speak of abolishing the mass? Why do those who made Christ a mere doctor, not speak of refusing their homage to the Virgin? Let this be explained to me, or let me be allowed to conclude that there was in the three first centuries, neither

Pope, nor confession, nor mass, nor anything of the kind; for you are not, I think, of those who presume to say that if these things were not attacked, it is because they were then universally admitted and beyond all dispute."

"We do not deny," said Bridaine, "that certain dogmas and certain practices may have been carried further in the course of time than at their origin; but you forget that we admit, on the other hand, the perpetual intervention of God in all that the Church does or says. The development of a doctrine is therefore as sacred as its principle. When you have shown that we are not exactly what we were fifteen or sixteen centuries back, what have you gained? Because a man at thirty is more developed in every way than at twenty, will you contest his right to present himself as the same individual, to bear the same name, to inherit the same patrimony?"

"No," said Rabaut, "I would contest his right to nothing which shall have been incontestably his from his birth, or in virtue of his birth; but whatever more he lays claim to, I should ask to see his title-deeds. Where are yours? Can we reasonably let you say, 'Believe, for the Church is infallible'? In order to believe her infallibility, on her own word, we must believe first that she is not mistaken in affirming it. If I am not persuaded of it beforehand, what will her affirmation signify to me? Your title-deeds, if you have any, are and can be, after all, only in the Bible. Were you possessed of every other right, you have not that of concealing it from those who, before believing, wish to see them there with their own eyes."

"That of absolutely hiding it, no; that of taking it from those who are not in a condition to read it with advantage, is given us by reason itself. Would you ask a father by what right he takes away from his children books that, according to his views, they could not read without danger?"

"You are moving in a circle, and there is no question on which your Church, if hard pressed, is not immediately reduced to that. As soon as you begin to reason, you not only lose all your advantages, but you necessarily get without the limits of the laws of logic. A dispute, of whatever nature, supposes the possibility of a defeat; you are obliged to give out beforehand that you will not yield, that you cannot yield. All struggle is therefore an illusion on your side; to order, and to constrain, is the only part that you can act consistently with your principles. Thus, nothing can be more awkward or more embarrassed than the regulations made at Trent on the subject of the reading and interpretation of the sacred writings. It was impossible to permit it, nor could they dare interdict it entirely. It was therefore necessary to give with one hand, and to withdraw with the other. Nothing can be more curious than the debates to which the wording of this decree gave rise; and hardly had it appeared when, at Rome, it was considered too liberal. Three months after the Council was closed, Pius IV. interpreted it in the sense of an almost absolute prohibition; and not ten years ago an Inquisitor-General* dared to write: 'Some men have carried audacity to the execrable extremity'—of reading the Bible? No—'*of asking for permission* to read it!' And this is the state of things in Spain, the *most popish* kingdom. Is it otherwise elsewhere? Can you name to me a country where your Church does not employ all her strength and influence against the Bible? Wherever she allows it to be read, it is because she cannot prevent it. Wherever she can burn those who read it, she burns them. Where she can only burn the Bible itself"—

Bridaine shuddered. Rabaut paused for a few seconds.

"Conscience has spoken," resumed he. "I see that I have

* Perez del Prado, 1750.

touched a wound which is bleeding at your heart. Courage! Take out those two leaves that I saw you pick up in the court of the Palace of Justice: for I was there, you know."

He took them out. The book that had just been lacerated and burned by the hand of the executioner, in the year of Grace 1760, at Paris, with the *Esprit* by Helvetius, *L'Homme Plante* by Lamettrie, and the *Lettres Chinoises* by d'Argens, was—the New Testament.

There they stood, all three, contemplating those two leaves, blackened, crumpled, and soiled with mud. They were silent, but agitated by very different feelings. With Bridaine they were those of embarrassment and shame; the painful depression of a man condemned to share a responsibility that his heart shrinks from. He did not allow himself vanquished; but he had no longer either strength, or courage, or wish to contend further. With Rabaut they were those of mingled pity for his adversary, indignation against an impious despotism, but, above all, of love for the sacred volume so shamefully profaned. He would fain have pressed those pages to his lips, as the sacred remains of martyrs were embraced in former times amidst the ashes of the stake. Finally, with his friend, they were those of a cooler indignation, and of the pity of a thinking mind for those who imagine that by burning a little paper they can keep down the rising of conscience and thought.

"Give me those pages," said the minister at length, "I shall keep them as a remembrance of my journey to Paris."

"Take them," said the priest. "But no; not yet. I want to read them: I wish them to be useful to me too. I am to preach in a few days."

"Well?"

"I mean to take my text from them."

Bridaine was glad of the kind of expiation he had just thought of. He joined by this means, as much as a Romanist

could, in the regret at having seen the Bible burned; he offered to the two Protestants and to God a reparation for the outrage done to the sacred volume. He wished even to go farther: "Help me to choose," said he.

"I will read," said Rabaut. "Give them to me:—

"'—— they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:

"'And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath-days reasoned with them *out of the Scriptures.*'"*

Rabaut, without raising his eyes, stopped. Gebelin smiled. Indeed, after the discussion that had just taken place, the last words were almost an epigram. He resumed—

"'Opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered, and have risen again from the dead.'"

The next lines were illegible.

"'—— they drew Jason, and certain brethren, unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also.'"

"Those men were indeed quite wrong," said Gebelin. "Why did they not follow the customs of their fathers in peace? What madness to wish to change that which had existed for so many ages! Besides, the Jewish Church had received from God the most magnificent promises. What temerity to suppose it degenerated, and likely to be mistaken!"

"Are we going to begin our discussion again?" said the missionary.

"I beg your pardon; it escaped me involuntarily."

"Those who are persecuted," said Rabaut, "could scarcely avoid laying hold of all that may seem an allusion to their misfortunes, above all, in Scripture."

* Acts xvii.

"Excuse me," repeated Gebelin. "And yet, while we are on this point, allow me to ask you if the analogy that I pointed out has never presented itself to your own mind? You enumerate promises from whence it would seem, according to you, that your Church cannot be mistaken, and that, therefore, when she condemns us, we are justly and truly condemned. I will not for the present discuss these promises. I admit that it is to you, and to you alone, that they address themselves, or that they can be addressed. But the Jews had received many others."

"For a time."

"Agreed; but let me conclude. They had received promises, I say, far more clear, since no one amongst them ever had a thought of doubting it, whilst there has always been, even before our time, Christians who did not understand as you do, the assistance promised to the Church. These promises, besides, had been confirmed by facts. God had, in a manner, visibly presided over the destiny of His people; he had never ceased to watch over the purity of the faith preached by Moses, not only by ordinary means, but by special ministers—the prophets. Thus the Jews had all the reasons for believing in the infallibility of their Church that you have for believing in the infallibility of yours: they had them, I maintain, corroborated by the history of many centuries, during which Divine interposition had been manifest and incontestable. This assurance, say you, was but for a time. Yes; but it was to last, at least, till the time came for passing under another law. When the body of their doctors denied that Jesus was the Christ, what sign was there that they were no longer the only and the true leaders of the nation? None. Nothing had as yet announced that the primitive promises were no longer to be relied upon. They were nevertheless mistaken, grossly mistaken. And you also,

even though there had been ages during which you could not be mistaken, you may be so now; and if the high-priest erred in not receiving the Christian law, the Bishop of Rome may have erred in anathematizing Luther and his followers. Therefore"—

"Do not insist upon it," said Rabaut. "We could not read one line but would furnish matter for observations of this kind. I go on—'and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar'"—

But Court interrupted again—"Yes," said he, "not a line, indeed, in this picture of the persecutions of those times, but seems written with a view to us, and against the laws that oppress us. 'These all act contrary to the decrees of Cæsar,' was said at Rome—'These act contrary to the decrees of the king,' you repeat in France, and thereupon"—

"I have never approved," said Bridaine, "the intervention of the civil authority in what concerns matters of faith."

"Do you blame persecution?"

"I detest it."

"God be praised! at least there is one who does so. But how, then, can you remain the friend and minister of a Church that persecutes? How not, at least, stand up against the horrors with which she is tainted?"

"M. Rabaut has seen me at my work amongst the Protestants of Languedoc. Let him say whether I had recourse to"—

"No;" said Rabaut; "but you do not answer. You preached forbearance, it is true; you said you would have no other weapon than that of persuasion; but you well knew that before, behind, beside you, were men animated by very different sentiments. You knew that those Protestants whom you addressed outwardly as brethren, were treated as enemies, as slaves, as the refuse of mankind. When, and to whom did

you say clearly, that conscience ought to be free, that God alone has the power and the right to rule over it; that there is both error and sacrilege in interfering between it and God? When, and to whom did you say—but forgive me! It is not with you, it is with your Church that the fault lies. To use compulsion is a necessary, inevitable, and *fatal* consequence of the principles which she has laid down. As soon as she ceases to have this power of compulsion in her hands, as soon as, for one reason or another, she ceases to use it, what is she more than any other Church? As soon as the question is only one of reasoning, persuasion, or conviction, what is Rome more than Geneva?"

"And her unity?" said Bridaine, "and the support of so many millions of men?"

"Humanly speaking, it is clear that her position is a much better one. You have incontestably everything necessary to induce those who are disposed to receive a ready-made religion, to throw themselves into your arms rather than into those of our ministers. What I intended to say, and what you cannot deny, is this, that once constraint is taken off, the man who reflects feels himself immediately as free in regard to your doctrines as in regard to ours. Unity, numbers, antiquity, all that is but a presumption—favourable, it is true, but which can by no means be weighed against arguments or facts. I repeat, take away compulsion, and you have nothing more than we have. Are we not proving it to you here at this very moment? We have been arguing for nearly an hour with you. Have you found that the unity and infallibility of your Church gave you any advantage over us? Have you even tried to convince us by arguing from this unity or this infallibility? You have felt that these are arguments available only with those already convinced, or disposed at least, to be so, without examination. In themselves they prove nothing,

for you must always begin by proving them ; and thus we are at once on the ground of simple reasoning—on that ground where no one has any other right to plead than that of good sense and history. If we had yielded just now, would it have been because you were the organ of one Church more than another? By no means. We should have yielded to your arguments; that is to say, to the authority of reason, not to that of a man or a Church. If we are not convinced, if your arguments appear insufficient to us, what greater influence can you have over us than any other doctor? What can your Church do? There is no medium ; either you must let us alone, or you must persecute. And there lies—allow me to say so—there lies the first punishment of her pride. Either she must be exclusive, intolerant, and cruel, or she must immediately come down to the level of those sects of whom she speaks with so much contempt. She cannot remain what she is without sinking more and more into discredit in the eyes of reason and humanity ; she cannot change without denying her very self."

"Toleration, from what I see," said Bridaine, "would not find you very grateful."

"We should be grateful, really grateful towards the men who would grant it to us, although, strictly speaking, there is no room for gratitude on account of the cessation of an iniquity ; as for your Church, there is no fear that she will with her full consent give us the opportunity of being ungrateful."

"Who knows? A pamphlet has recently appeared"—

"The *Conciliateur*, you mean?"

"Yes. You would subscribe to almost the whole of it."

"True."

"Do you know by whom it is written?"

"Not surely by a priest."

"You are mistaken. It is by the Abbé de Brienne, Grand Vicar of the Archbishop of Rouen."

"Indeed? Well, wait till he is an archbishop himself. If he persevere, I shall confess myself vanquished."

"You are inexorable."

"Because I know with whom we have to deal. You have no lack of young priests, who, partly from liberalism, partly from infidelity,* outvie each other in the present day in toleration. When they have obtained preferment, what becomes of these fine speeches? You have of late years seen several of those attain to the mitre, who had been the most distinguished in the drawing-rooms of Paris for the generosity and liberality of their views. What have they done for us? Or rather, what have they not done against us? It is very plain. As soon as a man becomes one of the leaders in your Church, he must either renounce her, or do as she does. After the awful anathemas which your Popes have laid upon us, what bishop could treat us as brethren? After the encouragements given by your Church to the sovereigns who persecuted us; after the pompous eulogiums, so often largely bestowed by her on those who injured us the most, who could blame what she has advised, ordered, and praised so much, without condemning her? No, no! it is not from her that we shall ever obtain anything. If toleration does come, it will not be without her having struggled to the very last to maintain intolerance. If peace is established, the Church may submit to it, but as for putting her own hand to the work, never!"

Was Gebelin too severe? He might then have been thought so, especially in the presence of Bridaine; but events have only proved too well that he was right. We know that the clergy struggled to the very last extremity against the

* The Abbé de Brienne was very intimate with the Abbé Morellet.

tolerant views of Louis XVI. and his council; and as for the Abbé de Brienne, this is the language in which he expressed himself, when he had become an archbishop, in his address to that prince at his coronation, after he had been made to swear, according to custom, "to exterminate in earnest all heretics:"

"Sire, you will reject all counsels to a false peace, all systems of guilty toleration. We conjure you, do not put off taking from error all hope of having altars and temples in the midst of us; complete the work that Louis the Great undertook, and Louis the Beloved continued. It is reserved for you to strike the last blow against Calvinism in your States. Command that the assemblies of Protestants be broken up. Exclude all sectarians, without distinction, from all branches of public administration; and you will secure to your subjects the unity of true Christian worship."

"God will judge," said Bridaine.

"God will judge," said Rabaut. "Let us go on:—

"'And they troubled the people, and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things.

"'And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.

"'And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Beræa: who, coming thither, went into the synagogue of the Jews.

"'These were more noble than those of Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, *and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.*'"

Rabaut, without interrupting his reading, had laid an emphasis on these last details.

"Well?" said Gebelin.

"Well?" said the missionary.

"I will not ask you," resumed Gebelin, "for it would be almost a sarcasm, if you are going to take that for your text;

but let me ask you again, seriously and fraternally, what you make of these lines? Here are people to whom it seems that even an apostle ought not to be believed on his mere word; here is the fellow-labourer of that apostle, St. Luke, author of the book of the Acts, who is not satisfied with taking the thing as natural, but praises them highly for it. They believe, but only when they have seen that his doctrines are in the Scriptures."

"In what Scriptures, if you please? In the Old Testament, in the prophecies that foretold Jesus Christ. Nothing could be more natural, as you say, than to consult them, since their object was to assist the Jews in recognising the Messiah. Is it the same with the New Testament? Are the books that it contains of such a nature that their contents can only, or ought only, to be known by reading them? Have you not yourselves, in your churches, people who do not read them? people who cannot read?"

"We have none belonging to the latter class; and it is no small praise of the Reformation, we may remark by the way, that it has done so much, since its origin, for the instruction of the people. 'Where formerly two or three could read,' says Luther somewhere, 'you will now scarcely find two or three who cannot.' If it were otherwise, what would that prove? Is a law only just and good if every one can and will take advantage of it? Because there are people belonging to a Church, who cannot read, or do not care to read, shall that Church have a right to exact that I accept, like them, a ready-made religion, without putting it to the test? Confess, my dear sir, confess that you feel somewhat uneasy when you are obliged to give reasons of no greater weight than these to well-informed and conscientious men who are capable of reflecting! You are, perhaps, not aware how powerfully they were refuted in the first centuries, by those very writers whose

authority on all other matters appears to you so weighty and so sacred? A folio volume might be made of what they have said on this subject. There is a certain sermon of St. Chrysostom's in particular, which might be thought to have been written by a Protestant of our day, so clearly and directly does it reply to all that is objected against us. 'When we receive money,' says he, 'we insist on counting it ourselves; and when Divine things are concerned, shall we give in tamely to the opinions of others? Consult the Scriptures!' But they are not clear enough. 'The Holy Spirit,' replies he, 'intrusted the composition of them to unlettered men, in order that every one, even the least educated, might understand the word, and profit by it.' But have we time to occupy ourselves with these things? 'Let no one allege such miserable excuses as these: I must gain my livelihood; I must feed my children; it is not my business to read the Scriptures, but that of those who have given up the world. Poor man! is it, then, because you are disturbed by a thousand cares that it is not for you to read the Word of God? You need it even more than those who have retired from the world to give their whole time to God.' This is what St. Chrysostom says. Point out to us a single one of the Fathers who does not say nearly as much—one who preached from the Bible without recommending, without prescribing, the reading of it—one, in short, who has laid any other restriction on this right, or rather this duty, unless it be the obligation of reading it with attention and respect. No, no; let us have no more of those vain reasons in which you do not yourself believe. The true, the only reason is, that you are afraid of the Bible."

"Afraid! My God!" exclaimed Bridaine, "am I afraid of Thy Word!"

"As a Christian," said Rabaut, "certainly not. I know well that you love the Bible. I know with what admirable

warmth you set forth its doctrines. But it is one thing to speak of it in the pulpit, and another to put it into the hands of the members of your flock. In the pulpit, when you can quote it in support of your assertions, you do so; when you cannot, you do without it, but you do not go so far as to allow that you cannot. Your hearers, who have confidence in you, always suppose that you can. Never having seen the whole book, they imagine it to contain, in the clearest manner, all that you teach them; they cannot have any idea that these things do not occupy in it a place proportionate to that which they have in your Church. This is the error that the most sincere amongst you are obliged not to overthrow. This is why all priests, even those the most inclined to love, to quote the Bible, and to communicate every page of it gradually to their parishioners, are yet necessarily afraid of putting it as a whole into their hands. They are aware that they will not find it such as they must have imagined it, according to the teaching and the practice of the Church; they are afraid of that which the most submissive of their people, if they but reflect, must find wanting there.—But, for the last time, let us proceed. I ask for no reply, no justification. We are not your judges. God will judge, as you said just now. Let us go on."

"Let us go on."

"Here is half a page entirely illegible. It was St. Paul's speech before the Areopagus. Shall we take it elsewhere?"

"No. I have said that it is from these leaves that I mean to take my text."

"But there is nothing more—ah! here is one more verse. 'God hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness.'"

"We have it!" cried the missionary. "This sums up admirably what I have to say to these great lords and fine ladies, who, I am told, promise themselves so much pleasure

from hearing me! I want to show them, at least once, under its most terrible aspect, that religion which they make to themselves, or which is made for them, so complaisant, so easy, so accommodating. I hesitated; I asked myself whether I should not do better to avoid this exposure. But no—. I am decided now. It is the will of God. It is He who has spoken to me by this leaf."

"Right, quite right, brother," said Rabaut; "I like to see this confidence and enthusiasm. What should we poor labourers for the Lord do, if we did not feel ourselves sometimes under His immediate direction? Go—speak. It is He who sends you to that crowd of brilliant sinners."

"Perhaps. But He has sent so many to them, and so many have failed!"

"What! already discouraged!"

"No. But every time I ascend the pulpit, I cannot help asking myself what will be left in a week, a month, in a few hours, of the sermon about to be heard? after all, what am I going to do but increase the guilt of the greatest part of my hearers? They know all that I am going to say to them. They have been reproached a thousand times with what I am going to reproach them with. They have promised a thousand times all that I am going to make them promise. Oh! what a lamentable farce is that, where it is God whom men try to deceive!"

"Alas!" said the minister, "how often have I said the same thing to myself! True, I am less exposed than you to have people come to me for form's sake. I preach only to those who have to brave cold, heat, rain, snow, distance, besides our ordinary dangers, in order to hear me. If all these sacrifices did not prepare the heart for religious impressions, at least it would be natural to wish to benefit by a sermon so dearly bought. Unhappily, in the country as in the town,

under the vault of heaven or beneath the roof of your temples, man is always, and has always been, after all, the same. I too have often asked myself whether I ought not to fear, that in preaching to those who listened unprofitably, or not at all, I might aggravate their responsibility before God. What is to be done? must we give up preaching the gospel? must we so soften it down, that people who disobey it shall be as little guilty as possible? God forbid! And yet I think that there is a way of respecting your observation; I think that the preacher, without weakening any of the injunctions or the threatenings of the Word of God, may and ought to avoid the too frequent use of those which he positively knows will not be sufficiently respected by his hearers. It is a kind of charity, which, like every other, may degenerate into weakness, but which ought not to be excluded on that account. I do not like that death, judgment, and hell, should be brought forward on every occasion.

'Nec Deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus,'

I would willingly say with Horace; not but that the thought of God and eternity should breathe through the most insignificant of our words. Let it continually soar above our audiences, always high enough that they may not become too familiar with the sacred fear that attends it. He is a bad general, who would bring forward on every occasion his whole army. Nothing tends more to success than to know how to use, at all times, the right amount of ardour and power."

"That precept is less true, however," observed Bridaine, "in religion than in rhetoric. According to sound theology, there are no little sins. All are displeasing to God, if not equally so, at least so as that a real Christian can never say: 'This is a sin from which it is not worth while abstaining.' But although real Christians do not say so, false ones, who are

the most numerous, are very much inclined to say it. If they come to perceive that we reserve the threatenings of God for sins manifestly weighty, will they not feel themselves more and more authorized to believe that there are light sins, which you know leads at once to the conclusion that they may be committed with impunity?"

"The observation is just," said Rabaut. "I might even add, that from your lips it astonishes me; and that this is another point on which you are, unconsciously, superior to your Church. There can be nothing less Christian, you say, than the division of sins into weighty and light; yet in reality, what is it but your division into *venial* and *mortal?* Be that as it may, to return to your idea, I think that in certain cases, there would indeed be great danger in manifesting the intention of letting the great terrors of the Gospel lie dormant. But it is quite another thing to soften or veil them, in a word, to be unfaithful as a minister, or to scatter them profusely, at the risk of leading people at last to pay no attention to them. A preacher who can never speak without having recourse to great arguments, is like a waggoner in the mire, who invokes the gods, instead of disengaging his wheels; or, again, if you will, like one who cannot hold his whip in his hand without cracking it perpetually, so that his horse at last pays no attention to it. Once you have entered on this road, there is no stopping. It is only by dint of the most violent efforts that you can obtain now and then some attention or effect. Then these powerful resources that have been so miserably worn out, must acquire novelty from pompous language; and the little true greatness that might have been left them, will be completely taken from them by this mixture of what is merely human."

"I think, indeed," added Bridaine, "that when we complain of the little impression produced by the grandest ideas, we ought often to begin by examining whether it is not more

or less our own fault. A cook—forgive the comparison, it may take its place with that of the waggoner—a cook, I say, who should see the most delicate or the most ordinary dishes received with indifference, would, doubtless, have reason to complain of the guests at table; but he would be very wrong at the same time, in supposing himself to have nothing to do with the matter, and in not inquiring by what he himself might have contributed to the want of success of which he complains. To return to ourselves: nothing, I think, could be more instructive than an inquiry of this kind; it would be a new, interesting, and eminently practical way of studying pulpit eloquence."

"I understand you," said the minister. "A conscientious preacher cannot but have sometimes followed instinctively the steps that you point out; but this study would be improved by being more advised and regular. Instead of proceeding, as is usual, from the rules to their application, we should proceed from the application to the rules; instead of inquiring what must be done, we should analyse what we have done; in short, instead of descanting upon the results to be obtained, we should examine into the results obtained, and from what is wanting in them, we should see what was faulty in the methods used. It would be the best means of having constantly before us, not a secondary and conventional object, that of preaching sermons more or less according to rule, more or less eloquent, but the true, the only object, that of instructing and regenerating. Let us not ask: 'What must I say to them in order to convince them?' but, 'What ought to be said to me in order to convince me, myself?' The true preacher sees himself, as it were, seated amidst the audience. To him, the chief sinner to be condemned, is himself; the chief infidel to combat, is himself. This position is, I know, difficult to take, and difficult to keep."

"Almost impossible," added the missionary; "and that is one of my chief causes of humiliation, when I examine myself before God. How many times has it not happened to me, after a long and vehement sermon, to perceive that I had taken nothing to myself—that I had not even thought of taking anything! How often have I not even observed this very forgetfulness! And should we be surprised, after that, if others leave the church as we leave the pulpit? Always the mote and the beam, alas! We complain that we are not listened to, and we do not listen to ourselves!"

"Or we listen to ourselves too much."

"It is quite the same thing, for forgetfulness of the matter is connected with the worship of the manner. Here, assuredly, all is not our fault. However able or pious we may be, we must think more or less of words and phrases; if we extemporize, we must seek them; if we recite, we must call them to mind. But what preacher can boast of never having given to the manner more than the strictly necessary attention? Who will pretend that he has never watched the worldly and human effect of his periods, in the eyes and motions of his hearers? Ah! we say often enough in theory, that the salvation of souls is what we must desire above all; but, even amongst those who do desire it above all, can you find me one who has not often been far more preoccupied about the human success than the spiritual result—more concerned about the failure of a single sermon than the uselessness of twenty others?"

"Gentlemen," said Gebelin, "take courage; these are matters in which he who feels his weakness is, on that very account, already strong. Socrates was right in believing that he had made great progress when he had come to know that he knew nothing. What he said of human wisdom, the gospel authorizes us to say of Divine. Christian perfection, in all things, is less the being perfect than the feeling thoroughly

that we are not so. As for me, if I did not know you to be the most worthy to speak in the name of God in our day, what I have just heard would have been sufficient to convince me of it."

"Enough!" they both exclaimed.

"Enough!" repeated the minister. Since, according to you, our humility constitutes our merit, do not take it from us by praises, on which our poor hearts would be but too much inclined to feed. Let us rather continue our reading. You have a text; it is my turn now."

"Your turn?" said the missionary, in astonishment.

"Yes; I must have one, too. I have read for you; now read for me."

"Shall we argue?"

"Why not?"

"Because we have only argued too much already."

"Are we not as good friends as before?"

"I hope so."

"You hope? I am sure of it."

Bridaine took another sheet, and read:—

"'But go ye rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.'"

He stopped, and smiled. "If I had not picked up these leaves myself," said Bridaine, "I should think that you had chosen them."

"Have we, then, such need to choose," said Gebelin, "in order to light upon things that your Church would prefer forgetting?"

"Come," resumed he, "I expect a storm."

"It will not be too rough," said Rabaut; "you are too well prepared for it. I see well enough by your countenance,

that you are not much of a partisan of the fiscal system of Rome, and that you do not like to sell where the Master has said, 'Give.'"

"Yes; I confess, if I had to order reforms, I think I should begin there; for there is nothing which does more harm to religion, to priests"—

"To priests, doubtless, but above all to religion. I do not speak of the attacks that this system draws upon it from infidels, mockers, and superficial men. As for such, either they are allowed to say what they like, or else they are made to observe, that the priest must have something to live upon, that if they will pay nothing, they are at liberty, &c. But there is something yet more serious; it is the moral degradation of those who pay without complaining, and see no harm in the custom of paying. One is amazed to see to what a degree holy things may become a sort of merchandise in their eyes, like any other; but the final result of this perpetual purchase, from baptism to burial, from the confessional to purgatory, is the opinion—you do not teach it, but it is not the less deeply engraven on the hearts of multitudes—I say, the opinion that salvation may be bought, and that, after all, it is only necessary to pay well for it. I do not enter, you will observe, on the subversive side of the question; I do not say that your priests secure to themselves, by this means, on the whole, exorbitant revenues; I say, that of all the means used to provide for the support of religious worship and its ministers, this is the least compatible with the true interests of religion, and the true dignity of the priesthood. The evil is not the having had recourse to it at periods when it was perhaps necessary, it is the not having given it up as soon as it could be done, and wherever it could be done; above all, it is the not feeling, or the not appearing to feel, all that is vicious and fatal in the system."

"I have sufficiently shown you that I feel it," said Bridaine. "I proceed:—

"'And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.

"'Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore'"—

"You do not stop?" interrupted Rabaut. "If you knew how we love to read over and over again, in all our sufferings, those words of the Saviour to His disciples! How should we not lay hold of all those sad prophecies over which He shed the light of His grace, as so many appeals to our zeal, and so much assistance in our trials! 'I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves;' how often have I not said this in my Master's name to those poor flocks, hidden amidst so many adversaries, to those poor pastors to whom I, their brother, gave the imposition of hands, and whom I sent forth to their labours almost with the certainty of sending them to death! Listen to me; eighteen months hence, if I live, I shall have to officiate at one of these ceremonies; I have another sheep to send forth amongst the wolves—it is my son! I shall preach that day; this shall be my text."

They looked at each other. Both were affected; Bridaine could scarcely restrain his tears.

"Give me my leaf," resumed Rabaut. "Here is yours. Till Monday, then."

"Will you hear me again?"

"Without doubt. And will you never hear me?"

"I hear you?"

"Why not?"

"When?"

"When I preach upon the text you have given me."

"Where?"

"I cannot say."

"But in that case"—

"God will provide. Farewell. I am going to see your prisoner."

Rabaut went out, and shortly after Bridaine quitted Gebelin.

CHAPTER II.

Two or three days after this interview, had we been permitted to penetrate into the *petits appartemcnts* of the château at Versailles, we should have found the same two men whom we have already seen there, seated in the same arm-chairs, one on each side of the same fireplace, towards evening. As then, they had just returned from a walk in the gardens; as then, one of the two, to amuse the other, had exhausted all with which court and town had supplied him, in the way of anecdote, news, great or small scandal; as then, the one had been at last tired of listening, the other of relating; and *ennui*, after having followed them step by step amidst the marvels of Le Nôtre and Marigny, had installed itself under the roof of the palace before them.

The king, however, was even more melancholy, more *ennuyé*, than usual. The Marchioness de Pompadour had thought fit to celebrate her sudden return to favour by brilliant *fêtes*. The château de Bellevue had been lighted up. The old royal forests, so solitary and silent since the king's taste for hunting had ceased, had been roused by the sound of the horn, the baying of the hounds, and the bold gallop of horses in paths overgrown with brushwood. But all these sounds had re-echoed in vain in the monarch's desolate heart. These days, so full of excitement, had but deepened the void there, and although he had reckoned but little on a happier result, he had secretly groaned at feeling that it

was so. Thus in vain does the sick man say that he had no faith in the efforts used to save him; it is ever with painful astonishment that he sees their uselessness manifested. In this condition, when nothing can soothe his anguish, that which increases it the most, is to think that there is a remedy which he is obliged to forego. The king had experienced this additional suffering for some days past.

The excitement of gambling had been from his childhood one of the cravings of his incurable *ennui*; this excitement had become more and more active, just as the habitual drunkard requires stronger and stronger liquors. For some years past, heaps of *louis* alone could animate him sufficiently to prevent his being as weary at the gaming table as elsewhere. He often lost; and as his dignity required, when chance favoured him, that he should restore under another form all that he might have gained, *his money for play*, as it was called, was one of the most important items in his private budget.

The Comptroller-general, M. de Silhouette, had just insisted upon the suppression of this supply, either to lessen the general expenses, or to sanction more important acts of economy. The king had submitted, but he felt it painfully, and more and more every day.

After having done his best to enliven him, Richelieu had at last become silent and sulky. These were his usual tactics in order to oblige the king to listen rather more to him, or to force from him a consent to some new *pleasure*, that is, some new *ennui*. We have seen that this had succeeded the week before in bringing the king once more under the old yoke of the Marchioness. Indeed, on these occasions, it was always the king who made the first advances.

"Richelieu," said he, "what are you thinking of?"

"I? of nothing," said the Marshal. "I am too much your Majesty's servant not to do as you do always."

"That is a new species of flattery. When I see you commit some act of folly, must I say to myself that I have just done the same? But you are mistaken, Richelieu, I was thinking of something. Tell me, my lord governor of Guyenne, is there wine fit to drink in that part of the country?"

It often happened that the poor king cut short his melancholy thoughts, by turning them suddenly to a quarter which in truth had always sufficiently interested the Bourbons. From father to son in that race, all were fond of eating and drinking; and it was not without reason that their ancestor, Henry IV., the man of "three talents," as the old song says, had reckoned, amongst the three, that of drinking deeply. None of them, however, save the Regent, had carried it to excess; but that which was not *excess* in them, would have been such for many others. Louis XIV. at the height of his glory, and Louis XVI. surrounded by his jailers, alike conformed to the hereditary requirements of this ungovernable appetite.

The Duke was not, therefore, surprised at this curious interpellation. The governors were accustomed to receive inquiries as to the best produce of their provinces, and he who arrived from Perigord, for instance, must by no means be ignorant of the state of the truffle crop.

True, at that period the governor of Guyenne might easily not have been informed on the subject of the wines grown in his jurisdiction. We must say, to the shame of fashion, that it had not, up to that time, smiled upon the cheerful slopes in the neighbourhood of Bordeaux. The king, and probably no one at Versailles, had yet tasted their produce. He did not even ask, as we have seen, whether the wine was good, but if it was fit to drink.

Happily Richelieu, always on the look-out for novelty in

gastronomy, as well as in love affairs, had studied the question somewhat deeply.

"Sire," said he, "they have what they call Sauterne, a white wine, not equal to that of Montrachet, nor to those of the vineyards of Burgundy, by any means, but which is not however a bad wine. There is also a certain *vin de Grave*, which tastes of flint like an old carabine. It is like Moselle wine, but keeps better. They have, besides, in the Médoc and the Bazadois, two or three kinds of red wine of which they brag excessively. By their own account, they are nectar fit for the gods; and it is by no means the wine of Upper Burgundy for all that! However, the flavour is not amiss, and it has a sort of bitter, sharp taste, that is not unpleasant. As for that, one might drink as much of it as one liked. It only sets people to sleep, that's all."

"It sets them to sleep?" said the king. "Order a cask."

"I shall write this very evening, Sire."

"By the way, they say that the Bordelese have a terrible quarrel against you."

"Against me? And for what reason?"

"They speak of certain trees"—

"Have not they done with it yet? What memories those provincials have!"

"What was it about those trees? I do not quite remember."

"Some old elms, Sire, that were to be cut down to make room for a magnificent theatre. The magistrates would not consent; and the citizens, to thwart me, joined chorus with the magistrates; it was time to have it settled. One fine morning, the trees were found lying on the ground; upon which, as your Majesty may suppose, there was a great noise made, but meanwhile, I had my ground, and the theatre is being built. Have I not done them a service?"

"Perhaps; but they had, I think, a right to refuse a governor."

"A governor, Sire, is your representative; he is the king."

"Have I right to cut down trees that do not belong to me in a town?"

"You have the right of cutting off heads."

"After sentence pronounced."

"After and before."

"Indeed? tell that to the gentlemen of the Parliament."

"Faith! I would tell it to the face of those impudent limbs of the law! What, Sire! are you too going to persuade yourself that your power has any limits? Who established these Parliaments? In whose name do they pass judgment? Are you not the supreme, the only judge in France? These gentlemen are merely your councillors in matters of justice, as your councillors of state and your ministers are in matters of administration. Are you bound by the decisions of your ministers? Are you even obliged to consult them? No, Sire, no! Your power has no other limits than those you are pleased to set to it. The laws, the statutes by which judgment is given, have been made by you and your predecessors. You can modify, change, or abolish them; they only exist by you, as well as the bodies who put them into execution. Take a piece of paper, write upon it—'No more Parliaments.' Sign it—and there will be no more Parliaments."

The old Duke would admit of no jesting upon the rights of royalty; in fact, history was on his side. The king was in truth the supreme—the only judge. There was no limit to his power, the origin of which might not be found on going back in that power itself. We still admire Louis IX. administering justice in person, under the oak at Vincennes—was he not exercising as a father, but nevertheless exercising, the most terrible and absolute of all rights?

Louis XV. liked well enough in theory these doctrines, according to which there was no reason why a king of France might not be, if he chose, a despot in the style of the Sultans. In practice, he was afraid of them ; this weakness, joined to a considerable share of good sense, enabled him to perceive their logical absurdity. It was only ten years later, when the Parliaments constituted into a system their pretensions to being something in the state by themselves, that he ventured to make a solemn appeal to ancient facts and ancient principles. On the 7th of December 1770, at Versailles, the whole Parliament of Paris being assembled by his order, in their red gowns, in the Hall of the Guards, he arrived in all the brilliancy of royal majesty. The members of Parliament standing, and uncovered, were ready to listen in silence. "Gentlemen," said the chancellor Maupeou, "his Majesty had reason to believe that you would have received with submission a law which contains the true principles, &c.* Go back to the institution of Parliaments—trace them in their progress ; you will see that they hold their existence and their power from kings, and that the fulness of that power always resides in the hand that has conferred it. They are neither an emanation from, nor a part of, each other; the authority that created them, circumscribed their power and fixed the matter as well as the extent of their jurisdiction. Although intrusted with the application of the laws, it has not been confided to you to extend or restrain their decisions. When the legislator chooses to manifest his will, you are his organs, and his goodness permits you to be his advisers ; there ends your ministry. The king weighs your observations—he

* The edict, which the Parliament had refused to register, contained three principal articles: 1. A prohibition to the Parliaments to consider themselves as bound to each other, and forming one body. 2. Prohibition to interfere in political affairs. 3. Prohibition to supersede the execution of edicts, when, after having heard their remonstrances, the king should adhere to his first orders.

judges of the advantages or inconveniences of the law. If he then commands, you owe him the most entire submission; if your rights extended further, you would no longer be his officers, but his masters," &c.

This was severe, but strictly true. To support the contrary, and yet give themselves out as the supporters of the ancient monarchy, was—we beg pardon of *these gentlemen*—a lie. But how can we be astonished that *these gentlemen* were not on the side of the old doctrines, when the king himself did not dare to be so?

"Well said, Richelieu!" said he. "Your late grand-uncle, the cardinal, could not have spoken better; but we are a hundred and twenty years from his time, my poor friend."

"What if we were five hundred?"

"You would be a hundred-fold more in the wrong, although all the while in the right."

"What matter to them, after all, whether you are all-powerful or not, provided you only desire to do good, and keep up some forms?"

"You kept them up very well indeed; you, my representative, as you say, in the matter of the trees at Bordeaux! You have perhaps made me more enemies down there than the cardinal made for Louis XIII. by beheading a Montmorency. Abuse of power in small things, even more than in great, contributes to alienate the multitude from us, you may be sure; besides, we are not now in times when, provided the king was good-natured, no one was disposed to trouble himself whether he had the power of being otherwise. People require securities, guarantees."

"And by what right do they require them?"

"You understand, my dear Duke, that I am not constituting myself the advocate either of my Parliaments or my citizens. They require them—because they require them. I

do not say whether they are right or wrong; I state the fact. I repeat it; they require guarantees. It is not sufficient for them that I am good-natured, or even tolerably so; they begin to wish that I should not have it in my power to be the reverse. You know Quesnay, Madame de Pompadour's physician. It was remarked, and I had remarked it myself, that he avoided my presence; at last, the Marchioness made the observation to him. 'Madam,' said he, 'I do not like to see a man, who can by a word have my head cut off.' 'Come!' replied she, 'the king is so kind!' But he went away shaking the head that I leave on his shoulders. 'So kind—so kind,' muttered he; 'what does that prove?'"

"Impertinent fellow!" said Richelieu.

"Impertinent, if you like; but the impertinent of this description begin to be so numerous, that we shall one day be obliged to reckon with them."

"I hope I shall not see it."

"Your children will—and the noble oaks of your own park, Richelieu, may very possibly pay one day for the citizen elms of the magistrates of Bordeaux."

"Still those elms, Sire?"

"You will never guess what reminded me of them; for their story is rather an old one, and I confess that I had entirely forgotten it. Do you remember the passage in which Father Bridaine, the other day, gave such excellent receipts for getting rid of all obstacles in the way of our salvation? 'No reflections,' he said. 'Lay hold of the axe, and let the first stroke, if possible, be an irreparable one, in order to take from you the idea of regretting the obstacle, and from your enemies that of setting it up again.' Very good, I said in my own mind; that is characteristic! Such is by no means your habit, I believe, in spiritual concerns; but, however, this axe, this irreparable blow struck at once, all that made

me think of your freak in Guyenne—more, I confess, than I ought to have thought of it during a sermon."

"Poor preachers! whilst they are taking such pains to argue powerfully, and persuade people, they little think of all the ideas more or less absurd that they can conjure up, as they go on, for which theirs will be set aside."

"In fact," said the king, "it is not the first time that I have caught myself, during a sermon, a hundred leagues off from the preacher, the church, and all around me. When I retraced my steps, I had still to amuse myself with marking the series of leaps by which my thoughts had bounded over space. To prevent these wanderings of the mind is, I think, one of the greatest, but likewise the most difficult and rarest triumphs of the orator. There are preachers to whom I like to play the trick privately of not following them, and letting them struggle on unheeded. There are others, on the contrary, whom I reproach myself afterwards with not having followed more attentively. Father Bridaine is of that number. He decidedly pleased me. I should like to hear him again, but how? I cannot make him preach at Court. It would be an insult to the Marchioness, the Abbé de Narniers, his uncle, all their friends, and in some measure to myself."

"Let us go and hear him incognito at Paris."

"At Paris? You cannot think of it. I never went there incognito in my life, but to the balls at the opera."

"Well! when—but I beg your pardon. I think I was going to say something foolish."

"It seems that I must have done so."

"Your Majesty?"

"Yes, indeed! Are we not agreed that you are too much my servant ever to do but what you have seen me do?"

"Your Majesty's memory is good"—

"And my scent quick, is it not? 'When the devil grew

old, he became a hermit.' That is the end of your sentence —confess it."

"It is very certain that if people knew—that"—

"That the hermit of the *Parc-aux-Cerfs*"—

"Went to Paris incognito, they would never guess that it was to hear a sermon."

"Come what will, I shall go."

"We shall go, then. And here is, I believe, the Marchioness."

"At all events, do not tell her that!"

"No, Sire."

The king had been amused for a moment. He experienced the vague relief of a sick person, who has passed an hour without suffering, and who, on awaking, finds the night farther advanced than he had ventured to hope for.

Madame de Pompadour perceived this slight degree of cheerfulness at a glance. Her task of amusing the king was about to be rather less difficult for this evening at least. Richelieu received for his share of trouble a slight look of thanks. She had, besides, an ample provision of anecdotes. There was enough to last half an hour, and she told them remarkably well.

First, the Abbé Coquet, a good old priest, had been arrested by a town officer, who had heard it said that the *Abbé Coquet* must be seized—a very bad novel which was selling under the rose.

Next came a village *curé*, preaching upon sudden death, and exclaiming, "What then must we all come to! We go to bed in good health, and we rise in the morning stone dead."

Then an old councillor, M. d'Herbaut, writing to one of his friends, that he has just bought an estate, and adding that there is a chapel, "where my wife and I intend to be buried, if God spare our lives."

Afterwards, M. de Zurlauben, a dull learned man, that Mademoiselle de Lussan had described, it was said, as "an immense library, of which the librarian was a fool."

Then the Chevalier de Florian, who, on going to see the wainscotings that were putting up at the Palais Royal, had so thoroughly squeezed in his finger at a knot in the wood, that it had been caught. His deliverance had cost an hour's labour, to the great entertainment of the Duke of Orleans and his court.

Next, the Duchess of Orleans had put a gauze cap on the head of the old Baron of Estélan, who had fallen asleep in her drawing-room, and allowed him to go to the theatre in this pretty accoutrement.

The Princess de Carignan, who in a large party had felt one of her moleskin eyebrows coming off, and had fastened it on again—the points upwards, which made a moustache of it.

"But speaking of Mademoiselle de Carignan," said the Marchioness, "does your Majesty know what has happened to poor d'Orbigny, her *protégé*?"

"D'Orbigny? I saw him yesterday," said the king.

"For the last time, perhaps."

"Indeed!"

"He has been almost crushed to death in the Rue St. Denis, by one of those new carriages. You know"—

"A cabriolet?"

"Yes; for the name is beginning to take, and it is correct, I assure you. There is nothing to be seen in the streets of Paris but these jumping machines. Pedestrians do not know what will become of them."

"Have any other people been hurt?" inquired the king.

"Several," said Richelieu, "but only commoners. This time it is a nobleman."

"If I was the head of the police," said the king, "I should forbid these cabriolets."

Was he jesting? No. It happened to him every day to say, if he was such or such a one, he would do such and such a thing. But the courtiers took care not to notice these strange sallies. They would have seemed to remark his indolence too evidently.

"M. de Sartine," said Richelieu, "is pretty well employed at this moment. Pick-pockets abound; the convulsionaries are beginning to perform miracles again; the actresses are so insolent, that one or the other has to be sent every day to the For-l'Evêque."

"Yes," said the king, "and scarcely has the For-l'Evêque closed upon them, when your finest equipages, gentlemen, are to be seen arriving at the gate; and the lieutenant of police has more trouble in refusing your solicitations for these fine ladies, than in watching all the pick-pockets and convulsionaries of Paris."

"Without us, what would become of the theatre?"

"Oh! do as you like, do as you like; it is well for those who can."

"Sire," said the Marchioness, "it is very long, I think, since we have acted anything for you. What would you say to a little representation at Bellevue?"

"In the month of July?"

"Why not? We could have a pretty little theatre erected in the open air. We should have little company, but very select; few musicians, but good ones. We should act some nice little piece, *Le Devin de Village*, for instance, that you used to like so much. I have been amusing myself the last few days, by going over my part of former times; I still know it very well."

"Do you think so?"

He smiled his most malicious smile. *Her part of former times!* She got through it, in fact, very well; but the king chose to show her that he was not her dupe.

"Yes, indeed," resumed she, in a perfectly natural tone; "the music is so simple, so touching. Your Majesty had even caught some of the airs."

Let it be remembered, that Louis XV. had, as Rousseau says, the most discordant voice in his kingdom. He was perfectly aware of it, and to remind him that he had sung, was to pay back his epigram in his own coin. He got out of it by continuing to smile; but all at once, with a more serious countenance:

"When is this fête to be?" said he.

"On Monday, Sire."

"Impossible!"

She looked at him with surprise, and as if expecting an explanation, at least an excuse; but she received neither.

"On Tuesday, then," resumed she, partly offended and partly intimidated.

"On Tuesday."

He did not hope to conceal his journey to Paris from her, but at least he did not wish her to know it beforehand. All he desired was to excite her curiosity; it was one of his whims to puzzle those about him.

But when remembering Bridaine, he called to mind the other person from whom he had received, on the same day and at the same moment, a certain paper that he had not seen again. Not that he usually troubled himself much about the fate of the petitions which he made over to the first lord in waiting: chance alone—perhaps also the appearance of the unknown petitioner, had helped him to remember Rabaut.

"What is become of the second petition of Sunday?" said he.

"It is not lost, Sire; but it relates to business of such a serious nature"—

"Very good; you can speak to me of it another time."

"Besides, before speaking of it to your Majesty, I thought it right to send for the author, and to collect"—

"Very good!—very good!"

"Only one word more; did your Majesty remark the person who presented it?"

"Yes, rather. Who is he?"

"Ah! Sire, you may guess a thousand times without finding out. It was Rabaut!"

"Rabaut!—who is Rabaut?"

"Why, Rabaut the preacher—the pope of the Huguenots in France! Rabaut, who gave me more work to do in my government of Languedoc than all the Huguenots together; Rabaut, against whom your soldiers have been for more than twenty years in the field!"

"Possibly—but this is the first time that I have heard the name."

"Why, all France knows it."

"Possibly, I repeat. Is that the only thing," added he sorrowfully, "that I alone am ignorant of?"

He was silent for a moment, as if meditating upon the reproach that he had just addressed to himself. It was a reproach indeed, and a most serious one. No one, evidently, could have intentionally concealed from him a name so generally known; it was, then, to his own absolute indifference alone that his ignorance of the fact up to the present time might be attributed. "It was, then, that Rabaut," resumed he; "he has some courage, truly. Is there not a penalty of death against these preachers?"

"Doubtless, as your Majesty has confirmed the decrees of the late king."

"Yes, I recollect—I have signed so many on this subject.* What sort of man is he?"

"A man who must be seen in order to form any idea of him; a soul of iron in a frame apparently feeble, but in reality also of iron; a strange mixture of humility in all that regards him personally, and of pride if his faith is concerned."

"You have seen him, then?"

"This very day!"

"And where did you find him? for I suppose he went off at once."

"On the contrary, Sire, he had given his name and address."

"Singular man! I should like to see him."

"It is easily done, Sire; he is in my apartments."

"In your apartments!—here, at the château? Is he not afraid?"

"Of what, Sire? By giving his name, he trusts himself to your honour—and mine. It is a truce. When he returns to his mountains, then let the chase begin again. I think, to say the truth, that he never will be taken; he is so protected, so watched over by those people, that he could only fall into our hands by the greatest chance. Would it be very fortunate?—I doubt it. In the first place, despite of the gallows, the number of preachers has increased; it is said that there are sixty, and much too well organized to be thrown into any confusion by the death of their leader; it would only inflame their zeal. Besides, I could not answer for it, that a general rising would not break out in the province, and you know what it cost to re-establish peace there during the last years of the late king. When I governed Languedoc, I did every-

* A pamphlet in 1736 contained a catalogue of writings supposed to be published by an editor at Utrecht, and amongst them one entitled. "Treatise on Silence and Timidity, with notes on Indolence, and the way of signing one's name without knowing wherefore, by S. M. T. C."—(Sa Majesté très Chrêtienne.)

thing to lay hold of him, though I could not conceal from myself that I should perhaps be sorry to have taken him. I knew that every time an attempt at a rising was put down by his interference, their animosity was only adjourned to the moment when he himself should be taken. There is, as it were, on this point a tacit agreement, which has something alarming in it."

"Certainly," said the king; "and if the offer was made to him, to allow him to leave the country without his property being confiscated or his family disturbed?"

"The offer has been often enough made. Even more; we have tried to force him to it. I devised the expedient of arresting his wife and children at Nîmes, and of making his quitting the kingdom the condition of their liberation.* One night, therefore, the house was surrounded by soldiers. Orders had been given not to effect the arrest that night; I thought that fear would be sufficient. A door had therefore been left open that the wife might escape; but we soon saw that nothing could be gained with her or by her. She persisted in remaining; 'she wished,' said she, 'to be arrested, that the iniquity might be the more flagrant.' We were obliged to turn her out, to make it appear that she had escaped. She wandered for two years, I know not whither, enduring, with her young children, every kind of fatigue and privation, rather than induce her husband to leave France; nor would he himself have listened to such advice."

"What has become of her?" said the king; for in spite of himself he took some interest in this obscure heroism of one of his victims.

* Considering the kind of impossibility we find of arresting the ministers, who only multiply in Languedoc, I am inclined to think that we could intimidate them, and even disperse them, if their wives—persons to whom they are contracted in marriage, parents, or other relations, were imprisoned.– Despatches of the Count of St. Florentin. May 28, 1750.

"She came back to Nîmes at last, and has been let alone."

"What a life," said the Marchioness, "is that of these women—for they are almost all married, are they not?"

"Nearly all. They even marry in general rather early; they are said to find these unions, so surrounded by perils, a source of perseverance and courage."

"That does not quite agree," observed the king, "with what is said amongst us, that a married priest could not be a man of devotedness."

"Bah!" said Richelieu, "do we fight the worse for having a wife and children? Our priests do not marry, because it suits them to have no other interest in the world but that of their caste. Very devoted men truly, are the bachelors in gown and bands, who throng the toilets of our ladies! People do me the honour, Sire, to lay to my account many affairs of gallantry. I do not know but that there may be some exaggeration in the matter; but this I can say, that I never set about anything in that line, without meeting more than one abbé on my way."

"You are very severe, my lord Lovelace."

"Perhaps, but against whom? I forgive with all my heart the poor abbés who have nothing to do but to live on the produce of their benefices, for running after forbidden fruit; what makes me indignant, is, that the clergy should pretend, after that, to have the monoply of virtue and morality. I do not require them to be saints; but then, at least, let them not pretend to remain unmarried, in order to be so. If they will do as other men, let them do it; but let them not begin by declaring themselves quite set apart from others. I have seen the clergy in England; I have seen those of the Protestant states of Germany. There, they tell you openly, in plain biblical style: 'It is not good for man to be alone.'* But

* Gen. ii. 18.

there, likewise, amongst so many thousand ecclesiastics, years pass without a scandal being heard of; and if people wish for the pattern of a family both united and pure, they have but to go to the house of the pastor."

"Well preached!" said the king. "I am inclined to assemble all the gallant abbés of my kingdom, and to let them have a course of instruction under you."

"I am at your service, Sire. One thing alone troubles me."

"What?"

"Where to find a cathedral large enough to contain them?"

The king laughed a great deal, but the Marchioness rather less. We may imagine that she did not feel quite at ease when such were the subjects of conversation. Formerly, the king would have taken care not to pursue them; but he restrained himself much less since the ties that bound him to her had become merely those of old habit.

"Do not say too much evil," resumed he, "of the abbés in my kingdom. In the first place, the lower orders of the clergy are much better; then, see how things go on in Spain, Italy, America, wherever the clergy are all-powerful. In the Spanish Colonies, the excess of the evil has brought about a sort of remedy; that is to say, that many priests are seen to have under their roof a woman whom they treat almost as a wife, appearing in public with her, educating the children she has given them; in fact, married, all but the ceremony. This was, after all, what generally took place, but with much more scandal, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. When Calvin and Luther attacked us on these points, they had but to repeat what had been said long before in the bosom of the Church, in pamphlets, in books, in sermons, everywhere. They had but fair play, when they declaimed against the celibacy of the priests, we must allow."

"Come, Sire," said Richelieu, "this is a conversation some-

what redolent of heresy. If this same Rabaut heard us, he would be very much tempted, I think, to ask us why we persecute him and his adherents, if we too know so well when the opportunity offers how to differ from the Church. It is indeed a question that I have often asked myself, above all, when I commanded in Languedoc. 'Here are poor people,' said I, 'who, in everything else, are examples to the country; sober, economical, hard-working; despite of the disturbance we give them, they have kept themselves much above the surrounding population. The common police has almost nothing to do with them; it is a miracle when one of them is punished for anything but his religion.' 'Their whole crime,' as M. de Voltaire says, 'is to pray to God in bad French, instead of praying in worse Latin.' And I—I who should have scarcely anything to do in the province if it had been entirely inhabited by people as submissive and quiet as they—here am I, tormenting them, tormenting myself to devise every day some fresh harm to do to them, some new disquiet to give them! What induces me to do it? Do I hate them? No. Do I hate their doctrines? I have been told to hate them, but I have never examined them thoroughly, and to judge by their effects, they do not seem very hateful. Once more, I said to myself, what business have I to torment those people?"

"You had to put my edicts into execution," said the king.

"Oh! Sire, that is not the question. Never were your edicts better executed than in my time. The governor did his duty rigidly; the man asked himself privately, whether it would not have been better had his duty been different."

"All this is very subtle, Richelieu," replied the king, rather out of humour. "With such fine reasoning, people would soon come neither to obey at all, nor to enforce obedience."

But the king's ill humour had in reality quite another cause than the fear of not being obeyed. He, too, had just been

asking himself vaguely, why he persecuted the Protestants; and whilst the Marshal could take refuge at least behind the edicts which he only put into execution, the king felt himself alone under the weight of an immense responsibility. It was in vain that he said to himself that he had found the system established—that he had only followed up the errors of his predecessor. Forty years of persecution, without having inquired wherefore, was, of all the weaknesses of his reign, the most guilty and odious. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes had, since the death of Louis XIV., lost all the grandeur which that prince had the art of giving to measures the most iniquitous, and ideas the most erroneous. Louis XIV. had believed in the possibility of re-establishing religious unity in France; he had willed it seriously, resolutely, and obstinately.

What did Louis XV. desire? He himself had never known. He had allowed himself to be led, when a man as well as when a child, in the sanguinary and beaten track marked out by his great-grandfather. Besides, when Louis XIV. began to persecute the Protestants, he was beginning at the same time to become a good Romanist; he was giving up his excesses; he had married Madame de Maintenon; he was about to give to religion, or to what he believed to be religion, a large place in his life. It was in the midst of indifference and debauchery that Louis XV. had outdone the great king in cruelty. His hand was weary of signing—even without reading them—those edicts which blind obedience was to transcribe in letters of fire and blood, even to the very extremities of the kingdom.

CHAPTER III.

Such were the sad reflections the king had just made upon his own conduct. Had he been a man to take a good resolution promptly, that, at least, of inquiring seriously into the state of things, the cause of the Protestants would have been gained. He would have entered, of his own accord, attended by their blessings, on that course of toleration into which, ten years later, he allowed himself to be drawn slowly, unwillingly, still from weakness, from weariness rather than from humanity or reason, and without carrying to the grave the gratitude of any one.

After rather a long silence, "Richelieu," said he, "I wish to see this man. Go and bring him to me."

"What, Sire!" said the Marchioness, "are you in earnest?"

"Yes."

"Does your Majesty think of granting them their requests?"

"I do not know. What do you think?"

"Ah, Sire, it would be one of the proudest days of your reign."

He looked at her with surprise. Nothing, up to that time, had led him to anticipate such language. Not but that she had sometimes reflected on the misfortunes of the French Protestants. But if she thought of them, she thought also, and chiefly, of herself; she would therefore have taken care

not to enter upon the question so long as she did not clearly see the honour or profit to be drawn from it. Secretly admitting the liberal doctrines of the day, she wished for nothing better than to give her name to some one of those reforms to which the philosophers promised their incense; and she would have been doubly flattered to receive, with the praises of infidels, the blessings of men persecuted for their faith. Add to this, the desire to be avenged of the clergy, by whom she considered herself as persecuted, and to whom she knew that nothing would be more painful than the mitigation of these severities. She repented, however, having allowed her intention of thus acting to be too visible. The king continued to look at her fixedly, without saying a word—evidently he distrusted her, and himself still more. Because he had suffered edicts of persecution to be dictated to him, he would not allow an edict of toleration to be dictated to him. When a weak man takes it into his head to be firm, it very rarely happens at the right moment.

"Richelieu," resumed he, "go and bring me that man. I intend that he shall hear from my own mouth"—

The king's tone had entirely changed. Richelieu, who was on the point of going out, could not help turning round at these last words.

"Yes, from my own mouth," repeated he, "that there is neither pardon nor peace to be expected for him and those like him. Ah! do you think you will always lead me? Do you think that I shall be made to give the spectacle to the public of a king undoing what he has done, contradicting what he has said, giving back with one hand what he has taken away with the other? No, by God, no! No more heretics in France! One king, one people, one religion! Go, Richelieu.—Well, Madam, did I tell you to go away?"

"I am not wanted, Sire."

"Remain. You have seen me often enough weak and a slave; are you afraid to see me as a king?"

She sat down again, and was silent. We have already said, that Louis XV. was not wanting in majesty; but he never should have taken time to prepare to assume it, for in that case it vanished. Under the air of ill-temper rather than of majesty, with which he paced the room while waiting for the minister, Madame de Pompadour easily perceived the beginning of that embarrassment which she had always seen on similar occasions, and which betrayed itself besides, by a curious enough sign—a tremulous motion of the chin. Evidently he repented that he had sent for Rabaut. He did not feel strength enough to face a man whom his edicts condemned to the scaffold; he felt the superiority which the courageous victim always has over his tyrant.

It was not, however, without strong emotion that Rabaut walked towards the king's apartment, preceded by the Marshal. What did that master want with him, whose words had as yet never reached him and his brethren but as the breath of persecution and death? Richelieu had refused to give him any particulars. The king had appeared to him so agitated, so undecided, in reality, even while he tried to assume the appearance of decision, that he felt he ought to avoid alarming Rabaut by vain fears, or deceiving him by vain hopes. The king had seated himself. The Marchioness, at some distance, was reading, or pretending to read. The step of the Marshal was already heard in the ante-chamber.

"Oh!" said the king, "he will speak to me of his petition, and I have not read it."

"I shall come to your assistance," said the Marchioness.

"But you have not read it either."

"Never mind."

Thus did the majesty so vaunted vanish completely. The

actor called for his prompter again. The royal puppet himself helped to tie the strings again that were to put him into motion.

They entered.

"Sire," said Richelieu, "this is the person who had the honour of presenting a petition to your Majesty last Sunday."

Rabaut bowed, first to the king, then to the Marchioness. At this second bow, she coloured. Richelieu clenched his hands, and cast upon him obliquely one of those looks which seemed to say, "Are you mad?" The poor minister, in fact, had imagined he was bowing to the queen. He knew, as well as everybody else, what were the king's morals; but in his simplicity, as an honest man and a provincial, he never would have gone so far as to imagine him seated beside his mistress in the presence of a stranger. He had soon recovered his modest self-possession. He waited respectfully till the king should question him.

"You have, of course, been told," said the king at length, "why you were called hither."

"No, Sire!"

"Your Majesty did not order me to do so," said the Marshal.

"Has your Majesty," resumed Rabaut, "deigned to take notice of the petition that I had the honour to present to you?"

"Sir," said the Marchioness, with vivacity, "you are not aware, doubtless, that the king cannot be questioned."

"I was not aware of it, Madam. But my question, Sire, was not one. By granting me this audience—that I could not have ventured to hope for—your Majesty proves to me that you have read my petition."

"Sir," said the king, "there is no explanation to be given to you—no more than an audience is granted you. I heard,

by chance, that you were in my palace. I desired, that on returning to your fellow-religionists—for my clemency will permit you to return thither—you might put a stop to those false rumours of toleration that are circulated to keep up their fervour. Expect nothing—hope for nothing. New edicts, if necessary, will be added to those that you teach them to violate. Let them renounce a resistance which will be henceforward useless, endless, and aimless. Out of the Church there is no peace, no safety for them either in this world or in the next."

Rabaut, at the first words, had raised his head. Astonishment at the beginning, then indignation and disdain, scarcely tempered by a careless respect, were depicted on his countenance. The tone of the king, at first serious and noble, had at the conclusion become that of a man who strives hard to speak loud, and is the first to be afraid of the noise he makes. He stopped; Rabaut remained motionless. An instant, which seemed dreadfully long to the king, passed in the deepest silence.

"Sir, you have heard the king's orders," said Madame de Pompadour at length.

"Yes, Madam; and I still ask myself if I have heard correctly. Your Majesty"—

"That lady is not the queen," said Louis XV. hastily—for it was to the Marchioness that Rabaut had said *your Majesty*.

This incident completed the king's annoyance. Disconcerted likewise, but to the shame of him who had given occasion for such a mistake, Rabaut turned towards him, with downcast eyes, and without adding a word. Then, as the king did not dismiss him—

"Speak," said Richelieu. "His Majesty has perhaps a moment more to give you."

"Sire," said he slowly; "it will be brief. 'It is better to obey God than man.'"*

He bowed once more, but to the king only, and withdrew.

"Ha! ha!" cried the Marshal, with one of his loudest laughs. "Just like them! Tell them what you will, they will cast a verse of the Bible in your teeth—for I think it was one—and turn on their heel. Extraordinary people, faith! for such as your Majesty has seen him, such he will be seen, if he is taken, at the foot of the gallows. There was one, however, who faltered in the face of death. He was a man named *Molines*, of Nîmes, surnamed *Fléchier*, because his discourses, it appears, were in the taste of the late academician. The night before execution, the fine speaker trembled. He offered to become a Catholic. It was accepted; the conquest was boasted of—and, behold, the villain is in Holland, a greater Protestant than ever."

"And is he the only one who has fallen?" said the king.

"Duperron, at Grenoble, in 1745, is mentioned; but he died shortly after in a state of fearful remorse.† Theirs is an unexampled obstinacy."

"Yes, Richelieu, I know an example of it."

"Which, Sire?"

* Acts v. 29.

† Molines was still alive in 1778, but a prey to the remorse that had killed Duperron. One who knew him has left us some details respecting this long suffering:—"When I was still very young, I remember to have seen him come many and many a time to my father, who was pastor at Amsterdam, always accusing himself, whilst my father always endeavoured to make him understand that, by the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, he might hope for salvation, as well as any other penitent sinner. Never did he come to our house, and sit down in silence, waiting till my father should come and repeat to him for the hundredth time words of consolation, without my experiencing a sort of terror. I described as wide a semicircle round him as the room would admit of, and, nevertheless, I never for an instant lost sight of him. He was so absorbed in himself, that he took no notice of anything else. Thirty years of repentance appeared to him but as one day, insufficient to mourn over his crime."—M. Chatelain, "Feuille Religieuse du Canton de Vaud. 1840."

"Our martyrs of the first centuries, who are now on our altars, were quite as infatuated."

The king might have added, that the persecutions of the first centuries, though much more cruel, without doubt, than Voltaire pretended, never had either the length, or the tenacity, or the odious refinements of those organized by Romanism.

"Yes," resumed he, "quite as infatuated were the men who preferred suffering a thousand deaths to consenting—to what? To very little, to a mere nothing—throwing a few grains of incense into the fire, before the image of a god or an emperor. And we admire them, Richelieu; and we are right. And these men, because we believe them to be in error, are they very different from the martyrs of old, before God? Are we much wiser than the heathen, because, instead of attacking a new God, we persecute for two hundred years past a new way of adoring the same God?"

"Sire," said the Marshal, "allow me to give up all attempt to follow you in the changes of opinion to which it appears that your Majesty is inclined to yield. I confess that if I were permitted to hold the opinions you have just expressed, and were king, the Protestants in my dominions should soon be at an end of their troubles. One would have said, indeed, that your Majesty was quoting a page of the petition in question, for all you have said is there, almost in the same terms."

"You must show me that petition."

"I have it at hand, Sire; here it is."

"Well, read it to us, Marchioness."

She obeyed.

"'Sire,—One of our consolations in our miseries is the thought that your Majesty is ignorant of them, that you are deceived, at least as regards us, and that we may still love a king who would love us, if he but knew us.

"'But what means have we, Sire, of being known by your Majesty? Of the numerous petitions or memorials that we have laid by various hands at the foot of your throne, we have not heard that even one has been put before your eyes.'"

"It is true," murmured the king.

"I beg your pardon, Sire," said Richelieu; "I never arrived from Languedoc at Court but my hands were full of them; and as I had promised to convey them to your Majesty, I did so."

The king did not answer. He had not read them; he had not even looked to see what was the subject of them. Madame de Pompadour proceeded.

"'Will this one have a happier fate? It will be given to you by one of the men who have the most audaciously braved your laws. If he dares present himself before you, it is because he is conscious of having had all the respect for the royal authority which it can require, without encroaching on the authority of God.

"'It has been long out of the question for us to lay claim either to privileges, or guarantees, or subsidies, or any of those things which had been granted us in times of war and trouble. We only ask to live in peace amongst your subjects, bearing, as we already do, all the burdens of the State, without asking for anything in return but liberty to serve God according to our conscience.

"'Such are the terms in which we wish that the question should be presented to the mind, and, above all, the heart of your Majesty. Everything, for a century past, proves to us that we have no longer any real or irreconcilable enemies but in the ranks of the clergy. Everywhere else the most pious men are for toleration, some openly, others in their hearts. We are persecuted (and your Majesty, we venture

to say, is no exception in this respect)—we are persecuted much less from hatred' "—

"That is what you were saying, Richelieu," interrupted the king.

"Yes, Sire; but I thought so long before reading that."

"I did not; but they are right. Proceed."

"'— much less from hatred than from the old impulse of hatred, from a mistrust which has long been without foundation, from principles which are daily becoming more relaxed on every other point, and which are only kept up in our case in order not to appear to abandon them entirely. We can understand that your Majesty, being attached to the doctrines of the Church of Rome, should prefer having only the children of the same Church for your subjects; but we entreat you to ask yourself whether the severity of the means employed in your name is not out of proportion to the little antipathy that you really feel towards us.

"'But we do not now come before you to make our apology. We shall neither recall the part which we had in the events that placed your House on the throne, nor the unshaken fidelity that we have at all times borne to it, nor the distinguished men that we have had the honour of giving to France. We will not enter upon any discussion of the motives that make us adhere to the religion of our fathers, nor of the right which is supposed to exist to make us abandon it. We will only lay before you, as briefly as possible, a summary of the laws that oppress us. We are persuaded that your Majesty has never considered them as a whole, and that you would have turned away with horror from an edifice so monstrously cruel.

"'In the first place, if we examine its basis, we see that for forty-five years it rests upon a fact manifestly false. Louis XIV., shortly before his death, believed he might

affirm that there were no more Protestants in France. "*Their presence in our dominions,*" said he in his last declaration against them, "*is a sufficient proof that they have embraced the Catholic religion, without which they never would have been permitted to remain.*" Every one has long since agreed, Sire, that your great-grandfather signed these words without having read them. Whatever might have been his antipathy towards us, however deceived he might have been as to the result of his efforts, he had too much good sense to believe that we were all converted,* and, above all, to see a proof of it in the single fact of our remaining in France, since we were compelled not to attempt to leave it on pain of the galleys.

"'Be that as it may, such have been from that time the grounds of all the measures decreed against us. In order to destroy us without compunction, we were declared to be dead. We were then no longer called Protestants, Huguenots, or heretics, but *new converts*. From that moment, being reputed Romanists, every act of Protestantism placed us under the weight of the terrible penalties before decreed against whosoever should return to the Protestant faith after having abjured it. Up to that time, so long as there had been no formal abjuration, we could at least die in peace. Since the edict of 1715, all being supposed to have abjured, none can refuse the Popish sacraments on his deathbed, without being considered as relapsed. If he recovers his health, he goes to the galleys; if he dies, the sentence is executed upon his memory. His property is confiscated, and his body dragged upon the hurdles. Wo to the person who may have induced him at

* In 1698, thirteen years after the conversions by wholesale with which Louis XIV. had been flattered, M. de Bâville, the governor, wrote—"There are districts of more than twenty parishes where the priest is the most unhappy and the most useless inhabitant, and where, whatever pains he may have taken, he has not succeeded in making one Catholic, nor in settling one there from other parts."—Quoted by M. de Breteuil, in 1786, in his Memorial to Louis XVI.

that solemn hour to listen to the dictates of his conscience! If a man, his punishment is the galleys; if a woman, seclusion for life. In your armies, there is full liberty to be an infidel; but should a soldier die, declaring himself a Protestant, as has occurred at Uzès, it is instantly decreed that sentence be passed upon his memory. And this decision is not, as might be supposed, that of some obscure provincial tribunal, or of some harsh magistrate — it is the sentence of your council of state.

"'False as to facts, cruel as to consequences, the allegation of the last edict of Louis XIV. did not even agree with the former edicts. The Parliament of Paris remarked it; the registering of the edict was suspended for a month. "The king," said the attorney-general,* "has never precisely ordered the religionists to become Catholics; it cannot therefore be said that this change need be presumed. All the rigour of the law has fallen upon the relapsed—that is to say, upon those who, after having abjured, have fallen back into their errors; but in that case, it must necessarily be proved that they have come out of them, because in order to *fall*, they must once have been *raised*. It will always be hard to believe that a man who seems never to have been converted, should, nevertheless, have *fallen back* into heresy, and that he can be condemned, as if the fact were proved."

"'Thus, in this famous edict, were trodden under foot, as well the first rules of written law, and even those of good sense, as the natural feelings.

"'These representations, however, either did not reach the monarch, or could not modify the all-powerful influence under which he had signed the edict. The plan of Father le Tellier was to remain in full vigour. The edict was registered. Those who had pointed out its defects were the first to put it into execution.

* D'Aguesseau.

"'Such, Sire, is the inheritance left you by your great-grandfather.

"'By your edict of 1724, which your extreme youth at that period authorizes us happily to consider as not being your own work,* you declared your intention of confirming all the laws previously made against us. You added, at the same time, numerous clauses tending to establish them more firmly. It is you, Sire, who have definitively established the cruel code by which we find ourselves under restraint as regards our faith, our temporal interests, and our family affections, in the most minute details of all that is precious or sacred to us in this world.

"'We say, as regards our faith. You have been doubtless allowed to believe, like the late king, that there was no precise intention of putting violence on our consciences; that by these restraints we were only to be led to reflect on our obduracy, and to return, of our own accord, to the pale of the Church.

"'In fact, since the persecutions prior to the Edict of Nantes, there has been no punishment laid upon the heretic as such. Thus when we are visited, it is not as Protestants, as professing erroneous doctrines, but as men disobeying your decrees.

"'It is not, then, the Inquisition; but, in reality, how little does it differ from it! To punish us, not as heretics, but as violating laws framed against us because we were such—is it not one and the same thing? We are not commanded to believe, we are only required to make a profession of so doing.

* It was that of the Archbishop of Rouen, Lavergne de Tressan, assisted—for the fact is only too certain—by this same d'Aguesseau, who had become chancellor. Thus hard is the heart that the Church of Rome makes for even the wisest and most virtuous of her champions. It may be seen, in his *Discours* on the life of his father more particularly, with what complacency he enlarges on the severities of which the latter, sub-governor of Languedoc, had been the agent. He blames the *dragonnades*,—but, excepting that, all was lawful, great, and right.

But, Sire, in all that affects the conscience, to exact an outward profession is to do violence to conscience itself. Unless you tell a dying man that he may lie to God and man, you cannot order him to appear a Romanist without ordering him by that very fact to be one. Is that a command which your Majesty feels you have power to give? Or rather, if we may be allowed to reverse the question, do you feel that it would be possible for you to obey those who should prescribe to you, on the bed of death, the profession of a different faith from your own? And if, on the other hand, you knew that you could not disobey without being yourself condemned to the galleys, and your children to beggary, would not this pretended respect for your faith appear a cruel mockery in your eyes?

"'We are therefore reduced to appeal to the very edict by which your great-grandfather revoked that of Henry IV. as a law of protection. The last clause, indeed, forbade our being disturbed. Provided we had no more pastors, or churches, or worship, we were allowed to remain as we were in the enjoyment of our property, and to carry on our affairs "without being liable," said the edict, "to be troubled or hindered under the pretext of religion."

"'Thus spoke Louis XIV. in October 1685, and less than a month afterwards, we were already under another law. "His Majesty," wrote M. de Louvois to those who commanded in the provinces, "desires that the greatest severities may be exercised towards those who will not consent to adopt his religion; and those who may have the empty glory of being the last to obey, shall be driven to the last extremities."

"'Need we now say how these conversions by wholesale were obtained, on which it was about to be established, that we might all be considered as converts or relapsed?

"'Enough of Romanists have condemned the *dragonnades*, to make it unnecessary for us to prove all that was extraor-

dinary and odious in the employment of such means. Have they at last ceased? It is generally thought so, and yet, Sire, it is by no means the case. Every year, or almost every year, they have been attempted on various points of our unhappy country. Very recently, in 1758, they began again throughout the south, with alarming activity. It is only by forcibly quartering upon our people, dragoons, or horsemen of the patrol, that consent has latterly been forced from a great number of them to baptize their children in your Church.

"'But it is, above all, against our religious assemblies that the severest and most unremitting severities have been practised. Here we feel that we no longer stand so clearly on the inviolable ground of faith and conscience. Your Majesty has a right to choose that numerous assemblies should not take place in your dominions, without your authorization.

"'Ah! Sire, our reply is in all we have suffered and still suffer every day, by disobeying you in this respect. That desire to share our emotions with our fellow-men, so universal and ardent even in ordinary times, acquires such strength from persecution, that neither threats nor punishments, nor, in a word, anything on earth, can repress it. We had more than five hundred places of worship before our misfortunes—they have all been destroyed. We pass by the venerated spots where our fathers prayed, without even daring to cast upon them a look of regret; we go and seek at a distance, under the vault of heaven, that which we should have found in happier times under the humble roofs of our temples. This is our crime, Sire; this it is that has brought so many of our brethren to the galleys, and of our pastors to death; this it is which will continue to cause the same severities, for we feel that it is not in our power to cease to provoke them. The louder the storm rages, the more we shall feel the need of drawing closer to each other. Wherever it is not abso-

lutely impossible to assemble together, it will be done. This is no vain boast, Sire; may God preserve us from such! No one in France desires more than ourselves, not to have to disobey you. We are only opening our hearts to you at this moment; we entreat you to consider how deeply rooted are the principles and feelings that you are trying to eradicate from them. Ah! if those of our attachment to the king and to France were not deep likewise, and very deep, think you that it would be still possible for us to see in you a father, and in this land our country?

"'Such laws are not only cruel; they have, besides, the inconvenience of only being applied, as it were, at random. If some of us are punished for having been present at an assembly—a thousand, two thousand, ten thousand others have shared their crime, and yet do not share their punishment. Is it proper, is it wise, even setting aside all considerations of justice, that there should thus be laws in a state that punish blindly, and never reach more than one or two of the guilty in a hundred? What scope is left for the despotism of the men intrusted with their application! Justice itself, under such forms, would become unjust. Has it even been attempted to remedy in practice, the vices inherent to such a state of things?

"'On the contrary; in proportion as the laws became more severe, you suppressed the protecting delays of ordinary justice. When M. de Bâville was seen to condemn to the galleys, in 1698, as many as seventy-six Protestants in one morning, it might have been thought that we had reached the farthest limit of oppression. It would have been a mistake, Sire; it has been carried still farther. The law at that time only visited those who were taken in the overt act of assembling; but the same penalty has been extended, since 1745, to all those, says the decree, "*that shall be known*" to have been

present at these meetings. Still more, the sub-governor, according to former rules, could only pronounce sentence with the assistance of five doctors of law. You have taken from us this last guarantee. Since this same edict of 1745, the sub-governor sits in judgment alone, alone pronounces the final sentence. We must go back to the worst times of pagan persecution, to find examples of such absolute power committed to the hands of a mere magistrate.

"'The sub-governors are not only masters of our liberty and our lives, but also of our properties. On this head, despotism has no limits. In the midst of France, in the eighteenth century, there yet remain people *taillables et corvéables à merci*,* as it was called in the twelfth. We are these unfortunate beings, for whom the right of property is done away with; in fact, there is indeed not one of us but may be perpetually exposed to some of the pecuniary penalties specified in your edicts. It would be too long to enter into detail; besides, all previous regulations are now summed up in one, which would be equivalent, provided it were executed literally, to the pure and simple confiscation of all we possess in the kingdom. The sub-governor has been invested with the right to tax, arbitrarily and without appeal, *all* the Protestants of the district where an assembly has been held, including those who may prove that they were not present. In case the minister is taken, the fine is fixed; the head of each family is taxed at 3000 livres—more than a great many of us, in our poor mountains, possess as our all.

"'The sub-governors shrink, in general, from the odious task of thus reducing, at one blow, the inhabitants of a hamlet, a village, or a whole district to penury; but they will not always be able to shrink from it. Therefore, every year, some districts are visited with enormous fines; every year all may

* Liable to discretionary or unlimited taxation.—*Trans.*

expect the same thing. An individual may be in easy circumstances in the morning, who, before night, has neither food nor lodging.

"'This money has scarcely left our hands when it serves to pay for fresh means of oppression. It goes to the convents, to pay for the support of our wives and daughters, who are dead to us; it goes to the prisons, to reward our jailers; to the garrisons, to stimulate the zeal of the soldiery; in short, it is offered to whoever shall give notice of an assembly, shall facilitate the arrest of a minister, shall denounce, either publicly or secretly, any infraction of the edicts. Information, treachery, are openly recommended, openly paid; the simplest and first notions of honour, good faith, even pity, are reputed criminal. There is not only money for whoever betrays us, there are punishments for those who do not. If a fugitive minister comes and knocks at our door, let us hasten to give him up to the executioner, or we ourselves must go to the galleys. Ah! Sire, it is still a great consolation to be able to say, when we hear our sentence, "These very men who condemn us, on account of an edict, for having acted thus, would condemn us in their heart if we could have done otherwise!" But what, then, is that legislation which obliges judges to punish that which they would consider as honourable and natural in everything else? In presence of the immutable laws of reason and humanity, what difference can be seen between a Christian of the first centuries sheltering a Christian from the rage of the proconsuls, and a Protestant of our days sheltering his pastor from the search of a magistrate?

"'There are, unhappily, many other points, Sire, on which your edicts are not more in accordance with those eternal laws of which you would be the first to condemn the violation in every other circumstance.

"'What shall we say of the blows levelled against parental

authority, against all family ties and affections? Our children do not belong to us. Not only must we send them to Roman Catholic schools* under pain of enormous fines, but we must offer no resistance to the efforts made to convert them. From the age of seven they are allowed to abjure, and we cannot prevent it; abjuration, even when they are surprised into it, is irrevocable. Often it is not waited for. As soon as it is pretended that some inclination to become a Romanist has been seen in the child, his removal from his father is authorized, in order, it is said, that the precious germ may not risk being eradicated. By this means, Sire, not a child is safe; not a father can be sure of embracing at night those he has embraced in the morning. Nothing, besides, is settled or regulated in the exercise of this fearful power. Bishops, governors, sub-governors, delegates, and sub-delegates, mere priests, mere private individuals—all, on the slightest pretext, may be invested with it. The magistrates never refuse to sanction that which has been suggested by a zeal so admirable!' "

"It is infamous!" said the king.

Madame de Pompadour had watched on his countenance the effects of this reading. She had begun, in order to remain neuter, by reading as composedly as possible; gradually, either she allowed herself to be impressed, or else, rather, she perceived there was no longer any danger in appearing affected, and, therefore, lent to the real sorrows of the oppressed Protestants all that charm and talent with which she knew so well how to embellish the futile productions of

* In the midst of this great zeal for the conversion of poor peasants buried in their mountains, would we know what was passing at Paris? "The holy Archbishop de Beaumont discovered all at once, that not only the market-women did not send their children to be catechized, but that they themselves had no kind of notion of religion or morality, because their mothers and grandmothers had received none."—Madame de Genlis, "Dictionnaire des Mœurs."

the Muses. The Marshal, for his part, no longer sought to conceal his sympathy. A simple picture of suffering would have produced less impression upon him; but this tissue of immorality was repugnant to his good faith as a gentleman, and his bluntness as an old soldier. He would have better understood the extermination of the Protestants than these infernal combinations of a tyranny at once atrocious and mean. She proceeded:—

"'Such, Sire, is the deplorable condition to which you have reduced so great a number of your faithful subjects. In your laws against them, you have set aside principles which you would have felt bound to proclaim everywhere else; you have expelled from your heart feelings which you would blush to forget towards your greatest enemies. Yes, we repeat it, and your Majesty will not contradict us; you would blush to accomplish the weakening of a nation that was your enemy, by encouraging treason in the heart of it, by breaking all family ties, by torturing, in all that is dearest to them, those who should refuse to concur in your plans. Amidst the wars of the present time, you would have banished from your councils, as an enemy to your glory, the man who should have proposed to you to publish against England or Prussia some manifesto similar to your edicts against us; and you would have thought yourself obliged to protest in the face of Europe against the insult done you by that man, in supposing you capable of listening to him.

"'A legislation so cruel and so immoral can only have been conceived by men accustomed to consider good all that leads to the end in view. We do not know, and we do not wish to know, Sire, to whom we owe your severities. We only ask for one thing, in conclusion; that your Majesty would condescend to take at random, in your own edicts or those of the late king, any one of the regulations to which we

have called your attention; that you would present it, under the form of a general question, to those very men who approve them when they are to be applied to us; and if there is one who can say, This is good—this is wise and moral, we shall give up complaining, and for ever bow our heads beneath whatever yoke may be laid upon us.

"'But no, Sire, set aside all those hard-hearted counsellors whose prejudices are unmerciful; consult yourself only, your own reason, your heart. See whether it is not time that our sufferings should end; that our chains should fall off; that we should recover our rights, if not of citizens, at least of men. See whether it is indeed your conscience that induces you to offer us up as a sacrifice to the rancour of a power whose ambition you dread. Your great-grandfather never was more terrible towards us than when he was on the worst terms with the Court of Rome; all that he refused in submission and homage to the Pope, he paid him in Huguenot blood. May not that be the secret of our misfortunes in more than one respect? And if there are those who hate us because they are strict Romanists, are there not also those who become our persecutors precisely because they are the very reverse? Zeal may serve as an excuse for the former; but for the latter, what a fearful account will they not have to render to God!'"

"Is it finished?" said the king.

"Yes, Sire."

"Well, Marchioness, write:—

"To the Duke de Choiseul.

"I am of opinion, cousin, that there is something, and even much, to modify in the way in which those of the pretended Reformed religion are treated in my dominions. A petition has been laid before me, which shows me that my real intentions have been much exceeded in the edicts that I

have been made to publish, and that they have been carried too far. I see, moreover, that with all the measures I have been induced to take, and all those that may yet be taken, two or three centuries of severity would not, perhaps, suffice to attain the object I had in view.

"My intention, therefore, is that it should be given up. Draw up for me the plan of an edict, in which"—

The king stopped.

"An edict! It is very difficult. What will the clergy say? What will the Pope say? An edict!—no. Let us only send orders to the sub-governors secretly, to drop the former ones. But, all at once? What will be said?"

Louis XV. was thus constituted. At the first difficulties he drew back.

"What will be said?" resumed he. "Yes, this time they may cry out, 'Dédit du roi!'* No—no edict—no orders. That will be for my successor."

"In that case," said Richelieu, "the Protestants will need patience. The more so as the Dauphin is by no means friendly to them."

"Suppose your Majesty were to speak to the Duke de Choiseul," said the Marchioness. "He has drawn up more edicts than your Majesty," added she, laughing. "Perhaps he might arrange this one to the satisfaction of everybody."

"The devotees included?"

"No—but all reasonable people."

"That is to say, almost nobody."

"Try, at all events."

* The saying was one of M. Cury's, a professed jester, and well known to Louis XV. At the time of the quarrels with the Parliament, as they were selling in the streets an edict in which the king was beginning to yield, he said to a crier that it was not *édit* but *dédit*, and the man, who could not read, went away crying *dédit*, till he was taken up by the police. [It will be remembered that the French verb *dédire* means to *unsay.—Trans.*]

"Let us try. Send for the Duke."

"This evening, Sire?"

"This evening. I wish to have done with it. To think that, with a word, I can restore peace and happiness to thousands of beings, and be sure of their blessings"—

"Yes; it is a great thing to be a king, Sire."

"Do you think so?" said Louis XV., bitterly. "A great thing, faith! to discover at the end of forty-five years, that one has been the tyrant and the executioner of a great part of one's subjects? Suppose we were to go to supper, Marchioness?"

"And the Duke de Choiseul, Sire? I have just ordered him to be sent for."

"So much the worse. What was I thinking of? Do you know that I have already passed nearly two hours with him and the comptroller-general?"

She knew it, for Choiseul never failed to go and see her both before and after he did business with the king. But the king was not to know that they had this mutual understanding. They appeared to agree without seeming to have concerted together, and the king, who could only be led to have an opinion of his own from distrust, was not likely, in this way, to have one that differed from theirs.

"Has your Majesty done business with him in the course of the day?"

"For two hours, I tell you; and what a labour! to add up millions."

"And your Majesty complains?" said Richelieu.

"Millions of deficit, Marshal. Every year we get a little lower. When Choiseul showed me this gulf, I thought I should be giddy. We receive a hundred and seventy-two millions; we spend three hundred and fifty-seven. Reckon"—

"There must be some mistake, Sire."

"Not at all. The total of our receipts amounts to three hundred and twelve. Out of this number, one hundred and forty are spent beforehand. Deficit, a hundred and eighty-five. It is evident. Five hundred thousand livres a day, if you like better."

"What is that for France?"

"Oh! you are of the number of"—

"Of whom, Sire?"

"Of those of whom the court of accounts speaks in its last remonstrances. Here—read it—there, on that page."

Richelieu took the paper, and read:—

"'Your Majesty cannot be too much on your guard against those who, to satisfy their insatiable thirst for your gifts'"—

"I never asked for anything," said the Duke, pausing.

"No. You only took"—

"Sire!"

"Come, do not be angry. I know it was in Germany that you helped yourself, not in France. Have I ever appeared displeased with you for it? But finish the sentence. It was the end that I was thinking of, when I gave it to you to read."

"'—of those who magnify in your eyes the opulence of the people. The zeal of your people is inexhaustible, but their power does not correspond to their zeal.'"

"That is just like those limbs of the law," said the Duke, returning the paper to the king. "With what would they have us carry on war?"

"They would rather not go to war at all. But as there is no means of giving them that satisfaction at present, we have thought of another expedient. I have just ordered my plate to be carried to the mint."

"That is truly great and noble, Sire."

"Indeed! And I have no doubt my example will be

followed. To-morrow, you and all the Court will be requested to do the same.—Well, what is the matter? You seem as if you did not approve."

In fact, he was somewhat taken by surprise. The noble Duke's plate was very handsome! But he soon recovered himself.

"To the mint, then!" said he.

His decision was made. Early next morning, he had not a silver dish left. We have already said, what he received or took with one hand, he was always ready to give with the other, for his king and his country.

CHAPTER IV.

It was a curious sight, however, to see an administration absorbing every year one-half of what the next was to bring in. We say a *curious* sight, for as yet there were but few people who thought it alarming. A state of deficit had become the usual state of things. People had accustomed themselves to it in time of peace, it seemed therefore natural that it should be doubled in time of war. Not that the Parliaments in their remonstrances, and the political economists in their books, failed to attack such a state of things; the Government had not yet devised the expedient, as it did four years later, at the request of the comptroller-general, Laverdy, of prohibiting all publications on the finances. But the case was the same with their complaints as with those from the pulpit; many did not listen to them; many, though they listened, could not take the alarm. The longer the machine had been rolling on towards the precipice, the more they seemed to think that it might roll on for ever. The king, in spite of his indifference, was one of those who was the most anxious on the subject. "What would a merchant do," said he once to the Abbé Terray, "if he saw his affairs in the same state as mine?" "He would drown himself, Sire," answered the abbé.

The poor king drowned himself in his own way. In the amusements of debauchery, he stifled as he best could all feel-

ing of that mighty ruin which he had neither courage, strength, nor even the desire to remedy.

The Cardinal de Fleury, alone, since the time of Colbert, had drawn up a budget for Government in which the expenditure, on paper at least, did not exceed the receipts; and he had only attained to it, thanks to a long peace, by considerably reducing the army, and giving up the navy.

In the budget of 1726, the expenditure was brought down to a hundred and eighty-two millions, an amount equal to or even below that of the ordinary receipts.

This estimate, which may be thought very low, was far from being so in reality. In the first place, a hundred and eighty-two millions, at that period, were equivalent to at least three hundred at the present day. In the second place, the population has doubled. These three hundred millions would therefore be equal to six hundred. Finally, a multitude of expenses, which are borne in the present day by the central treasury, were then laid upon the provinces. Thus, for instance, in the same budget of 1726, public works are rated at four millions.

On the other hand, notwithstanding reductions which had appeared exorbitant, the king's household is rated at twenty-one millions (thirty-two or thirty-three of the present day; nearly a hundred thousand francs a day)—and yet the king, in 1726, was Louis XV., only sixteen, already married, but without children, without mistresses, without expensive tastes, and respectfully submissive to the old minister who had drawn up this budget. Then came his passions, and all was changed. The fixed and known expenses underwent no increase. The king consented willingly to reduce them, and it was no sacrifice to him, for pomp annoyed him. He felt lost in the galleries of his great-grandfather; he did his best to diminish the palace of Louis XIV. When he was seen retrenching

a million on expenditure that at least served to increase the brilliancy of the crown, it was a sign, alas! that he intended to throw away two, if not more, in channels where the dignity of the king was lost, as well as the gold of his kingdom. Besides, it was certain that these very retrenchments announced so ostentatiously, would not be realized. He had not strength of mind to think of retrenchment in great things; and he was told that it was not worth while to economize in little, and that it would be a mere farce to cut off a few crowns upon so many millions. When penury reached its height, he consented to throw his plate into the furnaces of the mint, but would not diminish a single louis on the budget of the *Parc-aux-Cerfs*.

That very day, the alarming calculations of the comptroller-general had not prevented his reverting to the question of his money for play with the Duke de Choiseul. We have seen that M. de Silhouette had brought him to give it up; we have also seen how much this privation weighed upon his mind. The third or fourth day after, without as yet speaking of it, he had thought of means for having this money back. He could not venture to take it back. M. de Silhouette was an important personage; besides, the thing was known to the public. The king had been praised, and the minister yet more. In that quarter, then, there was nothing to be done.

The king had opened his mind, therefore, to the Duke de Choiseul. "We shall see," the Duke had said; but he was very glad to open the old path once more to the king. It was a favourable circumstance to have a service of this kind to render. Choiseul had therefore almost promised to get back these funds for him; so that, after having sent for him on other business, the king, when his minister arrived, already only thought of that. He took him therefore into his closet.

"Well, Duke, what news?"

"Despatches from Germany."

"Oh! from Germany," said the king, in the tone of a man who receives a different answer from the one he wished for.

News in general, we mean, serious news, interested him very little. He had often lost the thread of an important report, for the sake of an anecdote of the town. "There are news from Bavaria," he wrote one day to Madame de Châteauroux: "they are of the 13th December; *but I have not read them.*" Yet it was the 3d of January. Madame de Châteauroux, who aspired to act the part of Agnes Sorel, made herself very uneasy about this carelessness; Madame de Pompadour, on the contrary, it quite suited.

The king therefore appeared to care but little to know the contents of the despatches; but the minister was well pleased to let him sigh for a little while after what he wished so much to know.

"Yes, Sire, from Germany. It appears that all is going on pretty well. The campaign began rather late in June."

"Which was very absurd," said the king.

"Provisions were scarce, and means of conveyance difficult."

"According to the commissaries."

"Perhaps. But now the Marshal de Broglie is established in Hesse. Hanover is being put under contribution."

"Poor Hanover! after Richelieu, Broglie. Have they fought?"

"Yes, near to Clostercamp."

"The whole army?"

"Only one corps, commanded by the Marquis de Castries. Wesel, which the Duke of Brunswick was on the point of taking, has been relieved. He almost beat us."

"These contributions," said the king, "which are being raised in Hanover, shall we have no share of them?"

"None, Sire. We are only too glad that they cover a part of the expenses of the army."

"But, I mean, will there be nothing to keep back on the funds allotted?"

"On the contrary, our calculations are exceeded. There will be several millions to add."

"But, in short, have you got any money for me? Shall I be the last served?"

"Your Majesty is all-powerful. You have but to order. But you are aware that all eyes are fixed upon you at this moment."

"Did you say that the Duke of Brunswick had nearly beaten us?"

"And would have beaten us, Sire, but for the admirable devotedness of an officer of the regiment of Auvergne, the Chevalier d'Assas."

"Another to be paid," murmured the king.

"No, Sire; he is dead."

"Indeed!"

"They were about to fall into an ambuscade. D'Assas, who marched in front, was suddenly surrounded by enemies. He was told to be silent or that he was a dead man. 'To the rescue!' he cried; 'it is the enemy!' and fell pierced with wounds."

But the king had something else to do than to admire those who died for his sake. He wanted his money for play; he thought of it with the tenacity of a child that grows more obstinate the longer it is refused. The minister felt that the moment for yielding had arrived, or there would be no gratitude to be expected.

"Sire," said he, "all things well weighed, what you wish is not, perhaps, impossible. Some private retrenchments on the funds of my department* will, perhaps, make up to you for what you have been pleased to resign."

* Foreign Affairs.

"And no one will know anything of it?"

"No one."

"But when they see me play?"

"The king has no account to give."

He accepted; two days after, the affair was public. Who had betrayed the secret? Perhaps the minister—perhaps the king himself, unconsciously. But he continued to believe that no one would think evil of it; and as it is said, that stolen fruit is always better than that gathered at home, he never played with more pleasure than with this money stolen from diplomatic intrigues.

But to return. Once satisfied, the king appeared rather more disposed to speak of business. He inquired about the details of the campaign, went back upon the death of D'Assas, and spoke of it with praise; he even took notes of some observations to be made to the Count de Belle-Isle, minister of war. In short, he thought of everything except the subject respecting which he had sent for his minister.

But as the Duke was going away—"Oh! I forgot," said Louis XV.; "you must draw me up an edict relating to the Protestants."

"But, Sire, all that could be done against them has been done."

"I did not say 'against them.'"

"It is, then"—

"What your friends, the Encyclopædists, are asking for; well, does it not suit you?"

"It is a very serious business, Sire."

"And you see that I employ you in it, instead of St. Florentin, whose business it ought to be."

"You do me honour, Sire, but"—

He was very much embarrassed. To object was to deny principles which the king knew he held; but it did not suit

him at that moment to change in any degree the former severities. We have seen, that more than any one else, he needed to have an answer ready for those who accused him of lowering Romanism; more than any one else he strove to hide beneath the worn-out shreds of intolerance all that he was beginning to venture against the old spirit of Rome. Besides, he was not a man to feel any uneasiness at sufferings of which this policy rendered the continuance necessary. When a general has an object in view, he takes very easily the annoyances and sufferings to which his soldiers are to be exposed; so it was with M. de Choiseul. It cost him no more to leave a portion of the population under cruel laws than to send a regiment to the war in Germany, or a frigate to Pondicherry.

"So," resumed the king, "you would not be of that opinion?"

"I do not say that, Sire; but I repeat, the thing is serious. I should wish to reflect; your Majesty is not in the habit of taking such sudden resolutions."

This was another thing which gave the minister some disquiet. He trembled to discover in the king's determination some rival influence.

"Does that astonish you?" said Louis XV. "There is perhaps sufficient reason; but I know by experience that what I do not do at once, I never do at all. Besides, the edict will be examined in council."

"But I should wish that your Majesty would at least point out the basis of it."

"Well, we shall speak of it another time."

"Has your Majesty no other order to give me?"

"No.—Stop; when will you send me some supply?"

"Immediately, if your Majesty wishes it."

"No, not this evening, I have something else to do."

"What else has he to do?" thought the minister, as he went

away. In vain he said to himself that he should know next day by Madame de Pompadour; he seemed to perceive already that the king was escaping from the leading-strings, or taking another master.

The king had no such thought; he was only happy, without well knowing why, to feel disposed for once to act for himself. It was the pleasure of the child who has attained to walking a few steps alone without knowing how. He reflected for a few moments; then, as if proud of his new behaviour and desirous to show it, he returned to the Marchioness. She was alone. The Duke de Richelieu was gone, she said, to give some orders respecting the fête at Bellevue.

"Marchioness," said he, "we must finish this business. I wish to try my skill upon this edict that is said to be so difficult to draw up. You shall act once more as my secretary. Write—

"'Although firmly resolved to live and die in the Catholic religion, and not to tolerate any attack against its rights, honours, and privileges, of whatever nature they are or may be, nevertheless, it having been shown to us that part of our subjects have not yet been brought to the profession of the truth, it has appeared to us that some of our previous edicts might be modified, which were conceived under the supposition that there existed but one religion in our kingdom.

"'Our subjects who are not Catholic shall continue incapacitated to constitute a body in the state, under whatever form or denomination it may be. They shall remain subject to all general statutes, including those relative to the external observance of the festivals of the Church. No privilege shall be granted them; no right but what they enjoy in common with the rest of our subjects shall accrue to them from the present edict.

"'Our intentions being thus laid down, we have decreed, and do decree as follows:—

"'*Art.* 1. The civil disabilities to which our subjects who are not Catholics have been subject up to this time, by the fact of their non-Catholicity, are and remain abolished.

"'*Art.* 2. Their declarations of births, marriages, or deaths, shall be received by our officers of justice, without the intervention of the clergy.

"'*Art.* 3. There shall be as heretofore, but one public worship celebrated, that of the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman religion. However'"—

The king was trying to frame the continuation of this article, not without some trouble, when a knock at the door was heard. He went to open it; it was a page.

"His Reverence Father Desmarêts inquires if his Majesty will graciously receive him for a few minutes?"

"Father Desmarêts, Marchioness!" said the king, returning quickly. "What can he want?"

"Ah! Sire, he has got scent of the edict."

"Impossible."

"For a Jesuit?"

"Shall I receive him?"

"Certainly; but let me go out."

"We shall meet presently."

"At supper?"

"Very well."

She vanished by one door, and a few seconds after, Desmarêts came in by the other.

She was not mistaken; the confessor had got scent of the edict. It was not, however, the edict—the project of which was only an hour old, that had brought him to Versailles that evening.

Richelieu had met him bending his steps towards the king's apartments, in a serious and gloomy mood. These two confidants of the faults of the same man, so different in them-

selves, had always looked upon each other with a jealous eye. They were the living personifications of the two principles that contended for the mastery in the king's mind, and it was always more or less visible from their several demeanours which of the two for the time being had the largest share in this territory, thus tossed between heaven and hell. They were, however, far from manifesting the same feelings in the same way. When Richelieu triumphed, he scarcely condescended to look down upon Desmarêts from the height of his own importance; when Desmarêts triumphed, his eyes were more cast down, his voice more gentle, his behaviour more humble than ever. Thus, at critical moments, when he himself scarcely knew whether he was the victor or the vanquished, his countenance afforded a singular enough mixture of proud resignation and haughty humility. Richelieu amused himself, as he said, *by playing off* the old Jesuit. With that fatuity which his success with women encouraged, he sincerely imagined that he had scarcely any difficulty in making him betray his most secret feelings; he did not perceive that he began by betraying his own. Desmarêts had reached the very depths of Richelieu's mind, before the latter had even got to the surface of his.

"Good evening, Father, good evening!" cried he to the priest. "We are on our way to the king?"

"If his Majesty will condescend to receive me."

"If he will condescend—What! is not Father Desmarêts always welcome by day or by night?"

He fancied himself very malicious in reminding Desmarêts of the evening that he had come as far as the ante-chamber to be told by the attendants that the king was with his mistress. But it was this very remembrance that the Jesuit had resolved to brave. If he came at night, it was precisely in order to wash out the former affront by announcing himself to

the king wherever he might be, and in whatever society he might be.

"Your Grace is very obliging," said he.

"Do not let me detain you, Father. His Majesty is occupied, it is true"—

"Indeed!"

"But with very holy concerns—about the Huguenots"—

"Some edict, doubtless?"

"Yes; an edict—such as there has not been any as yet. Go, Father, go!"

And he went away chuckling.

"Faith," said he, "the edict stands but little chance. That devil of a man will never let it come to a good end; and he will bear it the greater ill-will that he expects something quite different—persecutions, dragoons. I should like to see his face when he hears what it really is."

The worthy Father also went away sneering, and he knew still better why. He had easily guessed, by the looks of the Marshal, what might be the spirit of this edict. He had had a copy in his pocket for two days past of the petition that had just been read to the king—thanks to one of his agents, secretary to Richelieu. In short, he thought he perceived means of turning these very ideas of toleration in the king's mind to the accomplishment of his own designs.

A grand council had been held at Paris, by the principal leaders of the order. They all agreed, as formerly at the archbishop's, in acknowledging the imminence of the danger. The question was making alarming progress. Some, and in particular the provincial Fathers, persisted in thinking that they ought to await the blow—to fall without resistance, or be conquerors without a struggle. Others, whilst they acknowledged that public resistance would only aggravate the perils of their situation, wished to endeavour, at least, to

ascertain how the king was disposed towards them, and what might be expected from him. It had been decided that his confessor should go to him, should candidly enter upon the question, and oblige him to give his opinion. Desmarêts, who was intrusted with this mission, was one of those who expected the least from it. He had raised the objection of the king's natural indecision, the feebleness of his most determined resolves. "All might be lost," said he, "without any chance of gaining a point." But the thing once decided, he had obeyed, as Jesuits only know how to obey. The will of his order, represented before him by these few Fathers, had become his. He went forward to the conflict without fear, as without hope, equally ready to venture much or little, to draw back or to advance.

"Come in, Father," said the king. "To what chance"—

"Does my presence surprise you, Sire?"

"But"—

"And I, too, asked myself, as I came, what I had to do here. The king is determined on his own ruin, I thought; let him accomplish it; but to involve in his own ruin that of France, of the Church"—

"This is language, Father"—

"That God will perhaps punish me for not having held towards you more distinctly and sooner. I shall no longer speak to you of your immoral life. On this head, I have done my duty. All that I could say to you, I have said, and to no purpose. Very lately, after promises and resolutions that I began to think sincere, you have mocked—I will not say *me;* the King of France is quite at liberty to mock Father Desmarêts—but God. *whom we cannot mock and go unpunished,* says the Scripture, and the punishment has indeed speedily followed the crime."

"The punishment?" said the king in astonishment.

"Yes; even twofold, because you do not perceive it. 'Hearing ye shall hear,' says the Scripture, 'and shall not understand; seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive.'"

"Where do you see, then," resumed the king, "this blindness of which you speak? I have sinned, but not without knowing it. Would to God"—

"A king is not only responsible for the evil that he does himself, he is likewise (he is even perhaps more) responsible for the evil that he allows to be done. Well, Sire, have you thought of all the evil that you allow to be done? Do you prevent what you can prevent? Do you mourn over what you can neither prevent nor punish?"

"If I was obliged to punish or deplore all the evil that is done and said in France, should I be able to stand it? At this rate, no king could ever have worked out his salvation."

"In truth, no king ever was saved, if he refused to offer those compensations to Heaven which his power permitted him to offer for his own sins and those of his people."

"Yes, that is it. Let us be but the servants of the Church—and, above all, yours—and after that, we may do as we please."

"What you please? No, Sire! At each fault you commit, you will find us on your road. Beforehand, we shall summon you, in God's name, not to commit it; afterwards, still in God's name, we shall be there to offer you pardon. We can offer it; but we cannot pay for it; no, not if we gave all our blood. It is for you to pay; and with what? If the treasure has not been laid up beforehand, where can it be sought for at the last moment?"

Here was Jesuitism embodied; to pay for heaven, instead of receiving it by faith, joined to good works, as a pure gift of the grace of God."

"Yes," repeated he, "where can it be sought for? Ah!

what an awful death is that of a sovereign, forced to say to himself, when dying, 'I have had twenty, thirty years, half a century, to labour for the glory of God, and I have done nothing.'"

"Nothing?" cried the king.

"Nothing; for so long as there is something to be done, and that we can do it, and yet hesitate, nothing is done. Should you consider the enemy vanquished, sufficiently vanquished, at least, for your glory and safety, to whom you had done no more harm than to those execrable principles with which you allow your dominions to be inundated? Should you consider that allies whom you allowed to be threatened and insulted as we are, could be much inclined to applaud your good faith?"

"Allies!" murmured the king. "Since when?"

"Since when? Listen to me, Sire. Since kings have existed, there has necessarily been an alliance between those who command and those who preach obedience. Besides, and above those who rule in the name of this world, there must be others who rule in the name of heaven; and the former can never try with impunity to do without the latter. This principle of obedience, without which all your power might, at the first wind that blows, become but a name, is represented by us, Sire; our Society is at the present time the incarnation of it. Do you ask by what title? Wo to the sovereign who, in these times, when everything is shaken, stops to seek our title! *We exist*, that is enough. It is not in the midst of the tempest that we would set about inquiring the history, the form, and the nature of the rock that would afford us shelter."

"And if it should be shaken also?" said the king. "If we should be carried away with it?"

"It would be more easy to be carried away without it.

Yes, Sire; whatever may be the opinion or the prejudices regarding us, we have become, by the mere force of things, the representatives of the past, the depositaries of all tradition. In our soil, the roots of monarchy as well as those of the Church have penetrated naturally, as in their appropriate ground. Let this soil be ploughed up, and you will see whether the plough of the times will cut up the one more than another. If you intend to rush forward, with the philosophers, into that new world that they profess to open out to mankind, then I have nothing to say to you. Lay down your crown at the threshold of it, unless you wish to see it soon in the mire. But if you mean to keep it on your head, no more of these tergiversations, by which your soul as well as your dominions will be lost. You must openly be the friend, the supporter of those, who, in defending themselves, defend you; whose fall will involve your own. The time is past when sensible people might say that our Society is not the Church—is not religion. Religion, the Church, existed before us; will they exist after us? That is the question. It need no longer be asked how such a position has been made for us, or how we have made it for ourselves; all that is required, is to understand that it is ours; and that whosoever, at the present day, is not for us, is necessarily against us, against religion, against monarchy, and against all that monarchy, religion, and the Church have to support in this world. Judge, after that, judge what you have to do."

So spoke the king's confessor. He was urgent, severe, inexorable, and what is more, he was right. We have already said that then, as now, the Jesuits were Romanism incarnate. To break with them, with whatever precaution it might be done, and whatever illusion might exist, was to break with Romanism; it was to open out to the light of day, every depth that slumbered in the darkness of the past. A vague

instinct had long since made the king feel all that he had just heard. Had he been more bold and active, he would have been seen, in early life, at the head of the champions of the past. He might have been broken in the struggle, but he would not have been bent.

"I am too old," said he.

"Too old to serve God?" resumed the Jesuit; "you are not too old to sin against Him."

"Father," interrupted the king, "we are not here in the confessional. Do not oblige me to remind you that you are in the king's palace and in the king's presence.—Well, what is the matter? What are you doing?"

Desmarêts made no answer. He knelt down slowly, his head bent, and his hands clasped at an arm-chair, on which he had placed a crucifix.—"My God!" said he at last, "I am in the king's palace, and in the king's presence, it is true; but I am yet more in Thy presence, and in Thy dwelling. Have I gone beyond my duty? Have I failed in the respect due to thine anointed? If I have, pardon me, Lord! but above all, let him not bear the punishment of my fault; suffer not that my imprudence should serve as a pretext to him for hardening himself. Let him break the vessel if he will, but let him keep what it contained. Let him refuse to give an account of his life to me, a sinner, provided he renders it up to Thee, my God! Thou hast long assigned to him a high rank in this world; Thou hast ordained that he should be born for the salvation or ruin of a multitude of Thy children. Thou hast committed to him, not five, not ten talents, as to the servants in the parable, but a thousand, a hundred thousand. What has he done with them, my God! and what will he bring to Thee, at the last day, when Thou shalt require of him the interest? Thou hadst appointed him in Thy place, to make Thy laws respected; and Thy laws are

violated with impunity. Thou hadst destined him to be the terror of the ungodly, and ungodliness walks with its head uplifted. Though the eldest son of the Church, he is ready to forsake his mother, and to allow her most devoted defenders to be taken from her. He is the most Christian king, and yet is about to stretch out his hand to heresy!"

"It is false!" cried the king.

But Desmarêts, without heeding the interruption, and without changing his tone, proceeded—

"He is going to restore to error the hope of raising up its altars once more."

"It is false!" repeated the king.

But he felt shaken; the tone, the calmness affected him. He shuddered at hearing himself spoken of, in his presence, as the dead are spoken of.

"He was, then, indeed guilty, my God," pursued the Jesuit, "that Thou hast thus abandoned him. He appeared to Thee too unworthy to defend thy cause, that Thou hast thus permitted him to lose all horror of Thine enemies!"

"Read this," said the king; "read."

"What is this?" said Desmarêts, slowly turning his eyes from the ebony crucifix to direct them to the paper that the king held out to him.

"It is my edict; read it, and see whether I renounce that faith that you accuse me of betraying."

Desmarêts rose; the paper trembled in his hand. He had reached the last lines before he seemed to have taken his eyes off the first, as they went slowly from word to word.

"My God!" murmured he; "my God!"

"Well?"

"Vain words at the outset; facts afterwards, and the facts cancel the words."

He allowed himself to fall on his knees again. He again

clasped his hands; his eyes went from the crucifix to the edict—for the paper, which had slipped from his hands, had fallen before the crucifix.

"My God," resumed he, "and this is what is offered Thee! Vain protestations instead of an active faith. In front, zeal! treason on one side! He says that he is resolved to live and die in the bosom of Thy Church, and he gives up the effort to bring back into it those who have abandoned it. He declares that he believes in her, and yet permits other doctrines than hers to be taught. He secures to her her prerogatives, and yet would leave those in peace who deny them. She alone shall have her worship in public; in private heresy shall freely exercise its own—as though there was any difference in Thine eyes, O Lord, between an insult in the heart of the town or in the midst of the desert, between an abomination by day and an abomination by night. What will this pretended most Christian kingdom be after this, but a whited sepulchre where the worms may multiply as they will? What will this king"—

"Father," said Louis XV., "let us put an end to this—it will be as God pleases. I should consider my own salvation paid too dearly, if the price was to be the continuance of the sufferings of so many people. No!—say no more about it; let them be converted, I am quite willing; but I have only too long allowed them to be persecuted. This edict shall be put into execution, Father"—

"No."

"I think you said—No."

"I said—No."

"It is my will."

"It is not the will of God!"

"It is my will. Short of a miracle"—

But he could not continue. Desmarêts, his eyes flashing, his arm raised, seemed but to have to pronounce the word to

perform the miracle. The king fell back, mute and thunderstruck. One would have said it was an apparition, and a man terrified at having called it up.

"A miracle!" said Desmarêts slowly. "If one is necessary, it will take place. Where?—when?—how? God knows! But He will not permit apostasy to be consummated. The eldest son of the Church shall not throw down its ramparts. Let him look to it, and tremble; at the first stroke his hand would wither!"

Then he let his own fall—and, his eyes cast down, his head bent, as if under the weight of the maledictions that might have been read on his countenance, he went out.

The king had kept his ground, but by a violent effort. He had exhausted in a few minutes all the springs of that mind which was so little accustomed to have a will of its own. He was alarmed at what he had dared to do—at what he had boasted that he would dare further. Depression already followed the irritation of the struggle. The most formidable enemy, the most invariable conqueror of a weak man, is himself.

CHAPTER V.

Let us return to Paris.

Towards the end of the same week, the staff of the philosophers' party was assembled one evening at the Marchioness du Deffant's. Conversation was going on—what was not talked of? We have already said what conversation was at a period when there were no newspapers, when all that reaches us in print was disseminated in talk, and when liberty, banished from the press, took refuge in the drawing-room.

A drawing-room, in the sense that custom had assigned to the term, signified essentially a drawing-room presided over by a lady. A man, however distinguished he might be, and however his house might be frequented, gave dinners, suppers, assemblies, but he had not his *drawing-room*. Every drawing-room had, besides occasional visitors, its special set. What clever woman did not make a point of having her *ménagerie*, as Madame de Tencin had said; the two principal *lions* of which, still to speak in her language, were Fontenelle and Montesquieu! Of all the drawing-rooms of that day, that of Madame du Deffant was at that moment the one most in fashion. Her rival, Madame St. Geoffrin, had neither less wit nor fewer friends; only, and it was a very important point, there was less ease at her house. Those who were the boldest feared to displease her; those who were timid preferred being

where it was less dangerous to be bold. People were willing to dine with the one; they liked better to philosophize with the other.

At either house, however, a woman who was beginning to contend with them for the sceptre, Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse, was sure to be met. She had been early brought into fashion by her equivocal birth, her singular countenance, a great deal of talent, and some information. Madame du Deffant, since she had become blind, had taken her in to do the honours of her house, and above all to keep her company, for she could not bear to be alone, even for an instant. To converse herself or to hear others converse, was not merely a pleasure to her, it was a necessity—the principal, the only object with her—in a word, her life, her all; a mania, in fact, which was only that of the times she lived in. On the whole, this blind old woman, talking philosophy in her arm-chair, was a pretty good personification of the eighteenth century.

In the midst of the crowd of which she chose to remain the centre, Madame du Deffant was, by her own account, the person who suffered the most from *ennui* in France. She spoke of her *ennui* as Voltaire did of his ailments, that is to say, continually and to everybody. She had begun to do so long before her blindness, as Voltaire had done long before he became infirm. It was but a strange compliment to the witty throng that fed her with gossip and slander; but no one took notice of it. It mattered little to them whether she continued to declare herself *ennuyée*, provided they continued to amuse themselves in her drawing-room.

She had lately become aware of what she might have foreseen. Her *protégée* had become her patroness; her drawing-room was that of Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse. What was to be done? To dismiss her? But there were people quite ready to set her up in a house of her own, and this new draw-

room once opened, who would remain faithful to the poor blind woman? A final discovery had nearly brought about the rupture, which only took place four years later. Three of the most assiduous guests at the Marchioness's evening parties had been surprised shutting themselves up in the daytime with Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse to converse. "Have I then cherished a serpent in my bosom?" exclaimed the mistress of the house at these news. She would have taken no notice of a love affair; she forgave her willingly afterwards when her intimacy with d'Alembert began to take that character; but to converse when she was not present, to frustrate her of a portion of her daily bread, to take from her the cream of the news and scandal, could only be abominable treachery in her sight. Thence proceeded skirmishes, quarrels, reconciliations, without end, the history of which must be read in the writings of the times, in order to have any idea to what degree the private concerns of two women could be an affair of importance in the general idleness of French society.

Nine o'clock had just struck. The drawing-room was nearly full: it would have been more so, had it not been the month of August. Let us go in. Let us try to catch some words in this confusion of grave nothings and serious questions lightly treated.

. . . . . .

"It is astounding! Come, M. de la Caille,* tell us that again. What a pity that M. de Fontenelle is dead!"

"Why, Madam?"

"Because he only could tell us those things without frightening us poor women too much."

"Why do you ask us about them, then?"

"Go on, good-for-nothing man."

"Well! it is as I had the honour of informing you. I

* The astronomer.

have calculated within a few thousand millions the number of leagues that separate us from a certain star that I have been studying for a long time past. I find—but I will not tell you the numbers. You would never recollect them. Listen! Light, as I told you, travels at the rate of"—

"Nearly seventy thousand leagues a second."

"Very good. How long has it been before my star became visible to us?"

"Six months."

"Come!"

"Six years."

"Bah!"

"How long, then?"

"More than nine thousand years."*

"Good God! I shall dream of it."

"Dream, Madam, dream."

"Nine thousand years! and seventy thousand leagues a second!"

"Nine thousand years. There may be stars created eighty centuries ago that we do not see yet: there may be some annihilated as long ago, and that we still see."

"Poor Moses!"

This was the conclusion of all the discoveries of the period. People little thought that science would at last agree with the author of the book of Genesis, by discovering in those few lines so scoffed at the most exact information it could have extracted from the secrets of creation.

. . . . . .

"Well! the handsome Madame Baillet consents at last to be adored by poor d'Herbigny."

"Indeed! Who told you so?"

"He himself."

* We have attained since that time much more accurate calculations.

"Ah, ha!"

"D'Herbigny is no boaster."

"O no!"

"If he says so, it is so."

"It *was* so."

"Is it so no longer?"

"It never has been so."

"If I understand you right"—

"This is the story. After more than a year of cruelty, 'D'Herbigny,' said she to him one fine morning, 'I want to have your picture.' He was up in the clouds. He rushed to a painter's. He sat six hours the same day, six hours the next. In two days the picture was done and framed. He went to throw himself and his image at the feet of his fair one. 'It is perfect,' said she, and rang the bell. In came, not her waiting-woman, but the porter. 'Master Peter,' said she, 'this is what I promised you: put it up in your lodge, and when the original comes—you will recognise him, will you not?' 'O yes, Madam!' 'Very well, say that I am not at home.'"

. . . . . .

"Oh, good evening, dear abbé! good evening! you have been remembered at last."

"*At last*, as you say."

"Is it, at least, a fat living that you have been allowed to sigh after so long?"

"*Fat*, no: my pretensions never went so far. It is what we call a *good* living."

"Six or seven thousand livres a year?"

"Nearly ten."

"Ha, ha!"

. . . . . .

"I tell you that the King of Prussia is a madman."

"A hero."

"A hypocrite."

"A sage."

"A tyrant."

"A friend of mankind."

"A robber of states."

"Like Cæsar."

"A scribbler on paper."

"Like Marcus Aurelius."

"You flatter the enemy of your country."

"I do justice to a great man."

"You rejoice in his successes."

"Because I see in them those of reason."

"Reason—with cannon balls!"

"Would you prefer it with thunderbolts, like your good friends of the Vatican?"

"He alone has kindled more fires."

"Decidedly you have no indulgence but for the stake."

. . . . . .

"You don't know?"

"What?"

"The Abbé de St. Marcelin has got a living!"

"Is it possible?"

"I have just heard him say so himself. *A good one*, he added."

"He is a violent Encyclopædist."

"What does that prove?"

"That proves doubtless that he is a clever man. But"—

"Is it not better that this living should provide for a clever man than if it fell into the hands of a fool?"

"Yes. I foresee the time when the first requisite for getting on in the Church will be not to believe in God. Well, abbé!"

"I beg your pardon."

"Is there a God?"

"Certainly, since I am an abbé."

. . . . . .

"Sir, the tradition is steadfast and immutable. It was from Montmartre to St. Denis, to the spot where the abbey stands, that the saint of that name carried his head in his hands."

"No, sir, no. Reason does not allow us to admit of such a long journey. A few steps, that is the fact. Is it not so, Marchioness?"

"Why so, my dear counsellor? *We have only to make a beginning.*"

. . . . . .

"What is going on at Versailles?"

"No great things."

"What of the Marchioness?"

"She is more in favour than ever."

"But it is said that the king looks more *ennuyé* than ever."

"She is only the more firmly settled. It is at those times that he gives up everything to her."

"People talk of a great fête at Bellevue."

"Yes, on Tuesday."

"What of the Abbé de Narniers?"

"He continues preacher to the king."

"And the other preaches on Monday, is it not?

"Monday, at St. Sulpice."

"Very good."

. . . . . .

"That M. de Buffon, with his grand style, is sometimes so trivial!"

"Why, how angry you are!"

"Did you see him, just now, beside me?—his legs crossed, his head thrown back, his eyes half-closed. He really seemed to think he was alone."

"He was seeking after some phrase."

"Yes—stop—I tried to begin the conversation. I spoke of his style, for you know one can speak of nothing else to him. 'What a happy mixture,' said I, 'of depth and clearness!' My gentleman threw himself back a little further. 'The devil!' he exclaimed, "when one has to purify one's style, it is quite another thing!"—(*c'est une autre paire de manches!*)*

"By the way, is it true that he never writes without having a sword at his side, and lace ruffles on?"

"I think, between ourselves, that no one has ever seen him at work with those famous ruffles on; but"—

"But he is worthy to wear them."

"At all events, he should at least put them on when he has to reply to a compliment."

"And, above all, to a compliment from Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse."

"That is one"—

"Which is but just. Do you know the one he made lately to a friend who was reading verses to him?"

"No."

"'It is very fine,' he cried out; 'as fine—as prose!'"

"Was he laughing?"

"Not at all; that is his system."

"You will see that he will one day erect a statue to prose."

"To *his* prose."

. . . . . .

"Sir, if the taxes were reduced to one-half their amount; if the strictest economy regulated the employment of them, we should never pay them willingly, so long as the collecting of

* "C'est une autre paire de manches."—The phrase is thus defined in the best French dictionaries—"C'est une autre affaire: ce n'est pas la même chose."—*Trans.*

them is farmed out. So long as the people perceive, between the treasury and themselves, those opulent functionaries, manifestly enriched by the sweat of their brow, you will never make them believe that it is for the state and not for them that they toil. Knowing beforehand what portion goes to government, every one is inclined to say—every one in the lower classes does say, that what he has paid individually will not increase, by a single sol, the sum employed for the public necessities. The reasoning is bad, I agree; but it is certainly that of many, and this ought to be a sufficient motive for removing all pretext for it. The collecting the taxes should remain in the hands of government, and the collector receive a fixed salary; the poor must have the assurance, in paying, that they pay to the state, and really contribute their small share to the necessities of their country."

. . . . . .

"That poor Poinsinet!* Will you never leave off turning him into ridicule, Viscount?"

"Ha! ha! I think I see him still, reciting those *Bas-Bréton* verses that I gave him, for Russian!"

"He has talent, notwithstanding."

"Faith! his little piece, the *Cercle*, is one of the prettiest that has appeared for a long time. But as to judgment, he has not a grain. A child might make game of him. He is one of those beings born to be mystified."

"To be what?"

"*Mystified.*"

"The word is not of the Academy, that I know."

"I believe so. We fabricated it three months ago, still in honour of Poinsinet, and the Academy has not the reputation of being very prompt."

* A dramatic writer.

"Hush!—there is Duclos listening to us."

"Duclos is too clever not to think as we do. Is it not true, Duclos, that the Academy does not move quickly?"

"*Slow and sure.*"

"Yes; but by dint of tardiness, people mar their fortunes—in public opinion."

"At all events, it is not my fault."

"We know that. You urge on the machine, we know; you swear in the midst of the Louvre, loud enough to make the very colonnade tremble."

"I?—Who says so?"

"Your colleagues—everybody."

"Ah! the dogs!—ah! the"—

"Hush! we are not at the Louvre. He is going to swear to prove that he does not swear. You would have been the very man for Cardinal Dubois."

"Thank you."

"Yes, indeed. You know that he used to swear on the slightest contradiction at a terrible rate; he lost precious time by it. One of his clerks asked him if he would not do better to have a licensed swearer."

"The office would indeed be quite as good as that of king's fire-screen.

"The king's fire-screen?"

"Yes; another *mystification*—I beg your pardon—that we made Poinsinet swallow. We told him that he was just appointed to this brilliant office. Two days after, when we thought no more about it, we heard he was ill, and of what? Of having roasted his legs by standing before a furnace of a fire, to accustom himself, as he said, to his duties."

. . . . . .

"Madam, I fear I am indiscreet."

"Never mind; say what it is."

"That charming letter which you were saying that you had received from M. de. Voltaire?"

"Well?"

"Might I venture to ask to see it?"

"If you promise me to show it to nobody."

"To nobody—except those who commissioned me to ask for it."

"So I am receiving a deputation, then?"

"A deputation, as you say. Here are Chamfort and St. Lambert, commissioned to back me if necessary. This letter"—

"Here it is; but be prudent. Let no one hear it, you understand, except friends. There are certain things"—

"Do not be uneasy, Madam. Come, gentlemen; there—in the small drawing-room"—

"Read it, St. Lambert."

"'FERNEY, *July* 25, 1760.

"'MADAM,—The eloquent Cicero, without whom no Frenchman can think, always began his letters by these words: "If you are well, I shall be glad of it; as for me, I am well."

"'I am unfortunately the reverse of Cicero. If you are not well, I am sorry for it; as for me, I am not well. Happily I have made a nest for myself in which I can live or die as I please. I have bought land round my hermitage; I have enlarged my sepulchre. Could I venture to think myself a wise man, I should do so, I am so happy. I have only begun to live from the day that I chose my retreat; every other kind of life would be insupportable to me. To you, Paris is necessary; to me, it would be fatal.

"'Would to God, Madam, that you could live as I do, and that the charms of your society might increase my happiness! I congratulate you and President Hénault on being often together, and consoling each other for the follies of the world.

"'You wish me to send you the works on which I am engaged when I am neither ploughing nor sowing. In truth, it is impossible, so much has my boldness increased with age. I can no longer write but what I think; and I think so freely, that there is no likelihood of sending my ideas by post. I shall, however, have the honour of sending you one or two new cantos of *La Pucelle*, that no one is acquainted with. If you want a picture of this evil world, you will shortly find one in my *Histoire Générale* of the follies of mankind. I am also engaged in drawing up for my own use, and perhaps after my death, for that of honest people, my thoughts on this world and the next, in alphabetical order. It will be entitled, I believe, *Dictionnaire Philosophique*.

"'The partial liberty with which people are beginning to write in France, is as yet but a shameful slavery. Therefore, you must get used to a scarcity of every kind of talent; to wit becoming common, and genius rare; to an inundation of books on war, while we are defeated; on finances, while we have not a sol; on population, while we lack agriculturists and recruits; on all the arts, while we succeed in none.

"'No invention, in fact, proceeds from us. In the arts, we have been mere barbarians in comparison to the Italians. In philosophy, it is only for thirty years past that the English have taught us something good.

"'The Spaniards conquered a new world; the Portuguese discovered the way to the Indies; the Arabs and Turks founded powerful empires; my friend, the Czar Peter, creates in the course of twenty years an empire two thousand leagues in extent; the Scythians of my Empress Elizabeth have just beaten my King of Prussia, whilst our armies are repulsed by the peasants of Wolfenbüttel.

"'We have the wit to settle ourselves in Canada, in the snow, between bears and beavers, whilst the English have

peopled, with their flourishing colonies, four hundred leagues of the finest country in the world, and we are even turned out of our Canada.

"'We build likewise, now and then, some ships for the English; but we build them badly. When they condescend to take them, they complain that we give them bad sailing ships.

"'Faith! our century is but a poor one!

"'You ask me what you can read that is interesting. Read the Gazette, Madam; everything in it is astonishing, like a romance. You will see there vessels laden with Jesuits; and yet one is never weary of admiring that they have only as yet been expelled from one kingdom. You will see there that the French are beaten in the four quarters of the world; our ministers tumbling down, one after another; our flat-bottomed boats; our descents—in the river of la Vilaine. You will see—But you wish to read, say you, something else than the Gazette. Well, I shall think of all that may amuse you. For instance, "*Infidelity refuted by simple good sense,*" by dear brother Menou, confessor to King Stanislaus; or, "*The Reconciliation of Religion and Intellect*"—*the Norman Reconciliation*, as some call it, by Bishop Pompignan, brother to the academician Pompignan; or—but you are in the midst of all these fine things, and it should rather be for you to send them to me. There is, however, a pleasure preferable to all that; it is to contemplate the verdure of vast meadows, and the growth of fine harvests.

"'Forgive me, Madam, for speaking to you of a pleasure to be enjoyed by the sight. You only know now those of the mind.

"By the bye, is your digestion good? I have come to the conclusion, after much reflection on the best of worlds, and the small number of the elect, that people are only really

miserable when they cannot digest. After all, the important point is to close one's career gently. All the rest is but *vanity of vanities*, as the saying is.

"'Accept my affectionate regards. V.'"

. . . . . .

"Well, M. de la Condamine, what news of our convulsionaries?"

"They are invaluable."

"You must tell us all about it."

"If you like—but hush! There is M. de Faillet, who was there."

"From curiosity?"

"From conviction, if you please. Let us go a little aside."

"Very well. Yesterday, then, sister Frances was to be crucified."

"To be"—

"Crucified, and in good earnest, I swear to you—a real cross—real, substantial nails! My hands and feet ache at the bare thought of what I saw. They pretend not to suffer, and according to them, that is the great miracle."

"Who knows?"

"Who knows? I should like to see you try. It is not, certainly, impossible that faith may diminish somewhat of the pain; but sister Frances suffered dreadfully, I promise you, though she said nothing about it. Though she did not cry out, her contortions showed it well enough."

"And who was the executioner?"

"The executioner—no; the helper, as they say in their jargon, for all these pretty little things, in the way of nails, swords, kicks, or blows, they call *helps*—the helper, then, was Father Cottu of the Oratoire, assisted by Father Guidi, a tall thin man, in spectacles, who wearied himself with telling the patient that the nails did not hurt her."

"And what did the patient herself say?"

"She diverted her mind by declaiming, in a language of which I understood nothing, about the calamities of the Church—as I was told, and the future reign of the saints."

"And did the saints clap their hands?"

"No; they only rubbed hers with a certain water prepared by St. Pâris, their patron, which has, they say, the virtue of taking away all feeling of pain."

"And how long did it last?"

"More than three hours."

"And who had you there besides M. de Faillet?"

"M. de Mérinville, his colleague in Parliament, M. de Janson, an officer in the Rifles, M. de la Tour-du-Pin, M. de Lafont St. Yenne, who went down on his knees from time to time, bursting into tears; others besides"*—

. . . . . .

"I tell you that M. de Voltaire is in jest, when he appears to believe in the prodigious antiquity of the Chinese and the Hindoos. Never did any man lie like that man. For instance, his admiration for Confucius, of whom we know almost nothing! and his adoration of Julian the Apostate, of whom we know but too much! and his whim of pretending that the Christians of the first centuries were scarcely persecuted at all! Do you imagine that he believes all the absurdities and abominable nonsense that he deals out in his pamphlets?"

"Not at all, I know very well; but perhaps more than you would suppose. By dint of repeating them, he gets convinced, and then"—

"I understand. By dint of lying, he becomes sincere. A sublime use, indeed, of language and intellect!"

* M. de la Condamine afterwards wrote an account of all he had seen in these strange assemblies.

"Say what you please, but the antiquity of the Hindoos is nevertheless"—

"Again—well, let us ask M. de Gebelin—he was here a minute ago. What has become of him?"

"There he is—in that corner."

"Who is he talking to?"

"A person whose face I do not know."

CHAPTER VI.

We have long known the face that was unknown to the advocate of M. de Voltaire and his ancient Hindoos. M. de Gebelin's companion was Rabaut. He had wished to take a nearer view of that brilliant world, the various aspects of which dazzled all Europe, whose least whisper imposed silence on the past, and seemed to open out the future. Gebelin, who was everywhere well received, had taken him wherever he could see without being much seen, hear without himself speaking, and form his opinions in silence.

Seated alone in a corner, they had, during the last few minutes, already reviewed all that the tide of company in the drawing-room had brought under their notice.

"He whom you heard give his opinion on the antiquity of the Hindoos, is one of those learned simpletons who would deny that the sun shone at noon, provided M. de Voltaire chose to deny it. His opponent is a Jansenist."

"I fancied I should only meet infidels here," said Rabaut.

"Observe that I said a Jansenist; I did not say a believer. Jansenism, in the present day, is often only a sort of decent infidelity. Many are Jansenists, just as others are infidels, from opposition or fashion; many, while they avow themselves to be infidels, belong nominally to the different religious parties. 'You are annoyed,' said Boindin to one of his friends, 'because you are a Jansenist atheist; but I am left in peace, because I am a Molinist atheist.'"

"In that group yonder, you recognise several of our friends of the other day—d'Holbach, Damilaville, d'Alembert, Grimm."

"And M. Helvetius?"

"He has received friendly hints not to show himself for some time."

"And Diderot?"

"He cannot keep within bounds. The Marchioness has hinted to him that she can dispense with his company. He comes at long intervals, in order not to appear banished, which, in truth, he is not; but he himself prefers being more at liberty than he generally is here. The Marchioness is willing to be an unbeliever, but not to break with religion altogether. She has even tried, once or twice, to become a devotee, for you know that Romanists of the higher ranks know no medium between fervent devotion, as they call it, and infidelity. 'I am weary to death,' said she to those about her; 'one must try a little of everything.' People laughed, and at last she laughed herself. 'I shall wait to be a little older,' said she; and she is waiting."

"How old is she, then?"

"Sixty-two or sixty-three."

"Who is that old gentleman whose attentions to her are so assiduous?"

"The Count de Pont-de-Veyle, her lover."

"Indeed!"

"The person at least who has long held that office. Nothing, however, can be more innocent than their intercourse, as it appears. A lover, in certain society, is like a necessary piece of furniture. A slight varnish of scandal is absolutely necessary, even if people had in reality no taste for it; it sets off the reputation, as patches on the cheeks set off the complexion. 'Do you not admire,' said Pont-de-Veyle to her lately, 'how

we have lived thirty years without one quarrel?' 'My dear Count,' said she, 'it is because we never loved each other.' And yet it was she who reproached M. de Fontenelle with never having loved any one. 'It is not a heart that you have there,' said she to him, touching his side with her finger; 'it is a second brain.' I long thought that the same thing might be said of her; but it appears that a certain Englishman, Lord Walpole"—

"He who was lately at Paris?"

"Yes."

"Had she known him in her youth?"

"Not at all; it was at sixty that she took it into her head to be passionately in love with him. He laughed at her; he went so far as to tell her, in a letter that has become public, that he did not choose, at forty, to be the lover of a woman of sixty. She perseveres, and writes him, it is said, letters in the most tender strain. The most curious part of it is, that the public do not laugh at it. Madame du Deffant is in fashion; she is the friend and patroness of the great dictators of opinion—that is enough; she has a right to be an old fool, and nobody either laughs at it or dissembles the matter. Besides, observe, that it is for an Englishman that she languishes; and in these times, the surest way to be popular in France, is not to be French. All the men you see here, with the exception of two or three, are admirers of the King of Prussia. How could they disapprove of the admiration of the mistress of the house for a noble lord who is a man of talent, and has made pretty good progress in the ideas of the day? This last point, you may believe, is essential. Out of the pale of infidelity, no salvation. What makes them puff the King of Prussia? Neither his talent as a writer, at which they laugh privately, and sometimes even publicly, nor his liberalism in politics, of which his subjects do not feel the effects in the

least; the true, the only motive is his infidelity. 'His progress,' say they, 'is the progress of reason.' What do they mean by that? Is it for the cause of infidelity that he makes war? Does he lay upon his conquered enemies the obligation of becoming infidels? No; but he is an infidel himself. That is enough. All his enterprises are just; all the harm he may do to France will be applauded by Frenchmen, and the only verses, I think, that M. d'Alembert ever made in his life, are in his honour. It is the most odious folly of which any people ever was guilty.

"Another passion in the direction of the opposite side of the Channel is that of Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse. It is true that Sterne, her hero, is a grave Churchman, to whom, I suppose, she has not many tender things to say; but she is infatuated about his book, and it will not be her fault if all our writers do not set about making *Sentimental Journeys* for her.

"The Count de Buffon, that I pointed out to you just now at her side, is the impersonation of the great man and the author. Few reputations are less contested than his: it is said that Rousseau, who is always in extremes, one day kissed the threshold of his study. He has a right to be proud of his works; but his pride is often without dignity: it is somewhat that of the upstart occupied with his title, or of the man who has come into a fortune always thinking of his money. Whenever he comes down from his altitudes, he is soon vulgar, and even coarse. He is accused of not having the respect for his fellow-labourers that their talents deserve. There are two of them, Daubenton and Guéneau, who are talking to him at this moment. Look how high he holds his head, how he takes his stand between them with his gold buckles in his shoes.

"You have heard M. de la Caille speak: he is one of the

first astronomers of the age, always calculating, always discovering, philosophizing very little, and studying all the better. There is his colleague, Clairault, rather too much inclined to forsake the heavens for the debates of this earth, which will, I think, be the fault of his disciple Bailly, one of those who cry up the ancient republics. Clairault is, for all that, a great mathematician. The comet of last year, the return of which he had calculated, has raised his reputation with the learned, and brought him into fashion with the ladies. He is talking just now to——Well! why is that lady screaming? Oh! I know—he has opened his snuff-box"—

"Who?"

"M. de Lalande, whom I was going to name to you. His passion is for spiders"—

"Does he tame them?"

"Not at all; he eats them. That box, which he calls his snuff-box, is full of them. He has just taken one. Look, he has torn off its legs! he is sucking them! Nothing can be more succulent, he says. He is an excellent man, however, but an incurable atheist.

"That group, in which they are speaking of taxes, is that of the political economists. There is young Necker, of whom I was speaking to you the other day at my house. There is his friend Turgot, a man who thinks wisely, but a great talker—less, however, than the sour Marquis de Mirabeau, who would be here, doubtless, if he were not in the Bastile, where he has been sent on account of his *Théorie de l'impôt*, There is Morellet, who has just come out of it, as you know: he excels in clearing up the somewhat confused ideas of his fellow political economists. It is quite a new science. The founders of it, to begin with Quesnay, are as yet far from having even laid down the first principles of it, or even of

having fixed the extent of the field it should occupy. These gentlemen sometimes do me the honour to ask for information on what was done in past times in these matters: they always come to the conclusion—sometimes with a little bombast, sometimes also with but too much truth—that there never was a country so badly governed as ours.

"As for literary men, properly so called, all that I have not yet named to you belong to that class, or desire to belong to it. There is young La Harpe, to whom the literary world has been thrown open, by two prizes in rhetoric, and who is preparing a tragedy, *Warwick*, of which his friends speak very favourably. There is young Chamfort, also celebrated by his college success, already forward in conversation, much sought after, but little liked. One is Colardeau, deeply wounded by the fall of his *Caliste;* the other, Saurin, who has experienced more than one reverse, and who, it is said, will soon rise again by his *Spartacus*. There, in the chimney-corner, is Barthe, a man of an original turn of mind, but an insignificant poet, not to say more; and Suard, one of those men who have acquired reputation nobody well knows why or how; and St. Lambert, whom Madame du Deffant has styled "false and frozen," but in too high favour at Ferney not to be welcome everywhere: besides, he is rich, and has taken to act the Mecænas, which may be seen well enough by his appearance. The person to whom he is speaking just now is Chabanon, formerly a devotee, now an Encyclopædist. Those two gentlemen, who are talking at the other corner, are also two of the Mecænases of the day, the Marquis of Chastellux and the Duke of Nivernais; the former amiable and without pretension; the other aspiring to the title of author, writing a little on every subject, never above mediocrity, and yet always praised. He was just now with President Hénault, talking of the history of France; he is now with Vanloo, chief painter

to the king, talking of painting, of course; and what the latter says to them to-night will be written by him to-morrow, to be published the day after. The one who is coming up to them at this moment is the Count d'Argental, the particular friend and confidant of M. de Voltaire, the only man whom he is known to consult about his works. That is saying enough, I should think, to explain why he is so surrounded with respect. The confidant—the adviser of the oracle! Some one said, he has no equal in Europe but the Pope's confessor.

"As for abbés, you see they are not wanting, all excelling in giving the lie to their habit, some by their infidelity, others by their conduct, many by both at once. You have there the Abbé de Voisenon, the great opera writer; there Abbé Raynal, the Diderot of abbés. There are some more, the Abbé de St. Non; the Abbé d'Ardigny; the Abbé de St. Marcelin, so delighted with his living, so surprised that it had been kept for him, as if the Abbé de Bernis, who has been so much seen in this drawing-room, had not just been made cardinal; and as if, after all, it were needful that an abbé should believe in God! The Abbé d'Argenteuil, who does believe, took it into his head to convert Diderot: people laughed at him; and we have seen no more of him here.

"Amongst the Jansenists, notwithstanding what I said to you of them, there are some who strive hard to become true believers. Did you hear those two gentlemen discussing with such simplicity the legend of St. Denis? Well, one of them is a man of no importance, but the other is M. de la Chalotais, the attorney-general, the enemy of the Jesuits. Thus do the greater number of their leading men think and act; they resist the doctrines of their Church, and lend entire faith to the most miserable superstitions! The deacon Pâris, as you just heard, has still more than one disciple. The police are continually on the watch for those assemblies,

where nails and blows do no harm, according to the adepts, so much does God delight in glorifying His saints! And when one is discovered, some man is sure to be found there whose position and education would have forbid us to suppose that he could participate in these follies. It is, however, among the Jansenists, with some few exceptions, that the few true Christians that Rome has still in France must be sought for. In vain would she renounce them; it is they, after all, who do her the most honour."

"With the ignorant," said the minister. "Is their Romanism real? The Jesuits whom they proscribe, are the only real and consistent Romanists. It must be easy to make them confess this."

"Easy, say you?" resumed Gebelin. "I have tried it a hundred times; a hundred times I have been convinced that we must not reckon upon reason, even if we have to deal with the most rational of mankind. One would think that there is a charm in all false and logically untenable positions, which makes people cling to them. The mind sets all its wits to work to find out explanations, distinctions, and pretexts. There is the pleasure of difficulties overcome; the pride of being out of the beaten track; there is—I know not what beside. People cannot account for it, but they persist; and he who would argue with them loses his labour. Add to that, the immense importance of the step to be taken by those who would carry out consistency. The Gallican who should confess himself not a Romanist, would have after that but to declare himself a Protestant. He might retain some of the dogmas of Rome; but he would retain them as we do ours, while recognising the right to reject them as soon as they appeared contrary to Scripture or conscience. There are few Romanists who do not make use of this right. To be a Gallican or a Jansenist is to have made use of it, and that freely;

but to acknowledge and proclaim it is quite another thing. People are afraid, they draw back, turn their heads aside, and go to sleep again. Shall I make the experiment once more?"

"On M. de la Chalotais?"

"No; on M. de Faillet, whom I see yonder, one of the most pious and sincere; in fact, the best Romanist of those who frequent this house. You will see with what a look of pity he will shake hands with me, and how his face will seem to say, Poor people! poor lost souls!"

"That is doubtless very charitable; but how then must he feel under the same roof with those gentlemen? Does he think us more decidedly lost than a d'Alembert or a d'Holbach?"

"Not in reality; but when these matters are in question, he cannot help thinking much more of us than of them. They are lost sheep, for whom it is of no use to be anxious; we, he thinks, have but wandered from the fold. M. de Faillet and his friends treat us on a small scale as the Government does on a great. Be Christians in the king's way, or you must go to the galleys; cease to be Christians at all, and you will be left in peace. It is but one of the forms assumed by a prejudice which is universal. The narrower the separation that divides, the greater the antipathy and the warmer the struggle. 'But he is a Jansenist!' said Louis XIV. one day. 'Indeed, Sire! I do not know if he even believes in God.' 'Oh! if that is the case —," said the king; and the favour he would have refused to the Jansenist he granted to the infidel. Such is the conduct of these same Jansenists as concerns us; we excite the horror of the more violent and the pity of the more charitable. But only belong to the Encyclopædia, and you excite neither their pity nor their horror. There! how the very man I speak of has just shaken hands with Grimm;

they have almost embraced each other. They are whispering together—but here he is, coming this way."

"Good evening, M. de Faillet!" said Gebelin, as if he had just observed him.

"Good evening, my dear sir, good evening."

Rabaut could not help smiling. The tone, the shake of the hand, the look—all, in short, was just what Gebelin had foretold.

"What was my lord Grimm saying to you?" resumed Gebelin. "He looked quite triumphant."

"As he always does, poor man, when he thinks he has made me angry."

"Doubtless some impiety?"

"A mere pleasantry. He is really full of wit."

"How easily you take it!"

"How can I help it?"

"You would not take a serious Protestant argument so easily."

"Sir!"

"Perhaps you are more afraid of it?"

"Afraid?"

"Or is it that you care less about God than about the mass?"

"I care about both God and the mass, sir."

"Very good."

"And I shall prove it, I hope, if I publish my works. It will be seen that"—

"Oh! with the pen it is quite another thing. We have time to combine our attack and defence; to repress feelings that are too warm, to sharpen those that are not sufficiently so. I speak of your habitual and instinctive impressions."

"God alone has a right to judge them."

"God alone!—and the Church?"

"The Church can have no right to judge what she has not the power of knowing."

"That would, I think, sound ill in certain ears and in certain countries. Your Church has never acknowledged that it was not for her to judge of the secret feelings of the heart. That opinion alone puts you already in opposition to her."

"At all events, it is not for you to reproach me with it."

"Certainly not; and all I ask of God for you, is that you may make progress in this doctrine. You have already made enough to cause us some surprise, when you appear to think that you are so far removed from us."

"That is indeed the question," added Rabaut. "Some details as to the religious party to which you belong have just been given me, sir, and I cannot in conscience help asking why you do not belong to us? For, after all, why are we not Romanists? Our reasons may be reduced to three: first, that which I may call hierarchical—we do not believe in the authority of the Pope; next, that which I may call doctrinal—we will only have the Scriptures for our rule of faith; and, lastly, that which may be called moral—we leave to every man the responsibility of his belief as well as of his actions. These principles are yours."

"Ours!" exclaimed M. de Faillet.

"Yours. Do me the favour to listen."

"Suppose we were to sit down?" said Gebelin.

They went into an inner room, and sat down.

"Let us resume the subject," said the minister. "My three points are in truth connected; it would be useless to enlarge upon them separately.

"With us, I say, every man is responsible for his belief. With you, what do I see?—from Pascal to Quesnel, from Arnauld to your leaders in the present day, an interminable series of discussions and contentions. Is such, I would ask,

the spectacle that would be given by men really convinced that they must entirely trust to the Church,—take what she gives, renounce what she takes away, approve what she approves, and condemn what she condemns? Either you contend—which I do not admit—for the mere pleasure of contending; or you feel yourselves responsible before God for your belief.

"Still more. Not only do you not appear to believe that the responsibility of your Church sufficiently covers your own; but you assume, in certain cases, that of a formal resistance. I have not now to examine the points on which you have been condemned; I confine myself to observing, that there have been, and that there are, numberless sentences to which you have never entirely submitted. When the Archbishop of Paris, your lawful pastor, refuses you the sacraments; when the Pope approves the archbishop; when the body of bishops, with one or two exceptions, is unanimous against you—it is impossible for me to comprehend in what sense you are still the sons of a Church which pretends to speak in the name of God, and which—you yourselves teach it when you bring forward her voice against us—cannot err."

"We do not deny her authority," said M. de Faillet; "we confine ourselves to distinguishing between cases in which the exercise of it is natural and legitimate, and those in which there would be usurpation."

"There it is! But, sir, in God's name, what difference do you see between us who always reject it, and you who reject it when you please?"

"What! would it be the same thing, for instance, to deny the king's authority altogether, or to resist it in cases of flagrant oppression?"

"Your comparison is not, and cannot be correct. The strongest advocates in favour of royal authority never have

claimed for it infallibility. They grant you—and how could they deny it?—that the king may frame bad laws, give bad commands, and have absurd ideas. Could any one say as much of the Pope, without renouncing him?"

"The Pope is not the Church."

"As you please; but what is the Church without him? From the moment that his voice is no longer that of the Church, where are you? What are you brought to? Where is the Church? How, when, and by whom does she speak? Every one may make her their organ; every one may say with equal authority what she may be supposed to teach, or not. We, too, admit in this way the authority of the Church, with this exception, that instead of resting, as you do, upon what she teaches in the present day, we rest upon what she taught in the first and second centuries. We attribute to no one, it is true, either the right or the power of telling us infallibly what she then taught; but in like manner, if you do not attribute to the Pope the right of telling you infallibly what she teaches in the present day, to whom do you attribute it? You are thus, like ourselves, brought to individual belief; you are thus labouring, each for himself, and on his own responsibility, to choose the religion that he ought to profess, with the threefold assistance of the Scriptures, history, and conscience. I repeat,—without the Pope, without an infallible Pope, it is in vain that you think otherwise than we do; you believe in virtue of the same principles as ourselves."

"What does it signify, provided we are in reality in the truth, whilst you remain in error?"

"What does it signify? Sir, that expression is almost an abjuration. You could not more clearly confirm all I have just said. What does it signify? you say. What does it signify how we arrive at the truth, provided we do arrive at it? But, in this system, the Church is only a help to be

taken when we feel the need of it, and to be put aside, consequently, so soon as we think we can do without her. She becomes an authority to be consulted; no longer *the authority*, in the absolute, complete, divine sense that all Popish writers have given to this word. Once more, we have nothing to do here with the consideration of results. From the moment that you believe you have a right not to submit in everything, but to examine, to determine yourself in what you will submit or not, you have rejected the Popish principle. To reject the bull *Unigenitus*, or to reject the Council of Trent, is all one."

"Come, come! It is easy to see that you do not know how these things are considered amongst us."

"No, thank God, I do not know all the subtleties to which you are obliged to have recourse, in order to appear a Romanist, whilst you still reserve some rights for your reason and conscience. Appear a Romanist! Do you even succeed? You do not deceive God; but can you even deceive man? Yes; those who are willing to be deceived; those whose interest it is; those who dread the publicity of a clear and distinct explanation. But do you deceive those who, like us, have no appearances to keep up, or those who, like the Jesuits, would have real and not merely nominal Romanists? Do you hope to deceive them? When you are summoned to submit in presence of the bull *Unigenitus*, and do not, what is the result of your deliberation? What have you to choose?—*yes*, or *no*. 'A bull,' say you, 'is not a decree in council.' But you have no permanent council that I know of."

"I beg your pardon," said M. de Faillet, "it is not assembled, but it exists. When the body of bishops has admitted, without objection, a decree of the sovereign pontiff, that decree has the power of a law."

"Very good; you could not better anticipate precisely what I was going to say. A bull, according to you, has only the

power of a law when it has been received by the whole body of bishops; and the bull *Unigenitus*, you were going to add, has not been so received. Bishops have objected—still object. Yes, but how many? It would therefore depend on a few, on two or three, on a single one, to prevent a decree of the Pope, received by all the rest, from being obligatory on the Church! But then, what you say of bulls, might be said of almost all the decrees of councils. Even at Trent, where there were so many reasons for union, scarcely one was made, which had not some bishops against it, often several, sometimes even a considerable number,—a quarter, a third of those who voted. Do you reject those? I am quite willing it should be so; but what is it then to be a Romanist? What right have you to keep that name?

"Everything, you see, everything brings us back to what I said when I began. The true, the only Romanists, are the Jesuits. One day that the Pope's nuncio was at the Chancellor d'Aguesseau's, at Fresnes; 'It is here, then,' said he, 'that you forge weapons against Rome?' 'No,' said the Chancellor, 'shields for her.' The whole quarrel lies there; what the Jansenists call shields, the Ultramontanists call offensive weapons; the Ultramontanists are right. At the same Council of Trent, when the General of the order of the Jesuits began to explain his theory of the infallibility of the Pope, he obliged every one to agree that he and his were, if not in the right, at least the supporters of the full and candid application of the principle of authority. He showed clearly that by refusing infallibility to the Pope, it is refused to the Church also; that if the right to disobey or even to examine be arrogated to ourselves, on one point, there is no reason why it should not be arrogated on all the others; that between Protestant and Jesuit, in short, there is but a fictitious, slippery, and false medium. If all Jesuits had only the candour

of Father Lainez! If they refused, like him, the name of Romanists, to all those who are not really such! What astonishment, what confusion would there be in your Church! But no; in proportion as they are violent against those who raise the standard of revolt, so they are accommodating to those who keep it in their own hearts. They allow whoever calls himself a Romanist, to believe that he is one."

"Why not?" interrupted M. de Faillet. "Why bring anxiety into consciences animated by the best intentions? I did not expect to have to be the apologist of the Jesuits *here*, but nevertheless"—

"Listen to me. Either one thing or the other—it is possible to be saved without being a Romanist, or it is not possible. If it is possible, let those be left in peace who have the courage and the candour to confess that they are not. If it is impossible, it is treachery to leave those in error who imagine themselves Romanists, and yet are either but half Romanists, or not at all, which in reality is the same thing."

"You are strangely arbitrary."

"Is it my fault? All questions in your Church necessarily assume that character. The best weapon to use against you—I had almost said the best punishment to inflict upon you—is to bind you down to your own principles, and to forbid your deviating from them. If you violate them, you join us; if you hold to them, you remain side by side with those whom you profess to abhor and oppose. Allow me, therefore, to say, that it is no small encouragement to us, in our struggle against Romanism, to see it contemned by so many of its own children. We are quite of one mind with the Jesuits on this point. We consider that they are right, quite right in declaring themselves the only Romanists, the only persons consistent in the application of Romanist principles—the only heirs, by right of their fidelity, to the divine promises which they pre-

tend were made to your Church. They can prove, that in condemning them, she is condemned; that in striking them, she is stricken. Condemn! strike! We are not those who would prevent you. But remember that the blow you aim at them falls on yourselves!"

M. de Faillet appeared as if he had ceased to listen. In his anti-ultramontane disputes, he had necessarily said to himself all that Rabaut had just said, though perhaps indistinctly. Like all Romanists who were enemies of the Jesuits, he had often been obliged to divert his attention from the question, in order not to see where the greater part of the blows directed against them in reality fell. Like all Romanists who approved an enlightened faith, moderate liberty, and sincere and honourable piety, it was only by closing his eyes to many things, that he could, without falsehood, continue to call himself a Romanist.

But it is impossible to give up at once a delusion, without which, it is evident that there would be nothing further to do than to lay down one's arms. The heart is wonderfully skilful in preventing the understanding from going to the bottom of these questions. The understanding, it is said, is often the dupe of the feelings. We would add, that still oftener, if not their dupe, it is their slave. There was no possible termination to the discussion. Happily it was interrupted by an incident.

"Gentlemen," said a servant, who was going from room to room to assemble the scattered guests; "it will begin immediately. The Marchioness takes the liberty of requesting attention and silence."

"What is it?" said Rabaut.

"Some reading," said Gebelin.

"Why this request?—do people talk while reading is going on?"

"That depends on circumstances. If the reader is of their coterie, you might hear a pin drop; if not, they are by no means particular. A few days ago, a young author, whose name, I think, was Bernardin, was reading to us the first pages of I know not what little novel. It was really very good; rather weak, but exquisitely natural. The whole thing, besides, was rather new, for it was about the Isle of France, where our writers have not as yet gone to search for new ideas. All at once, the gentlemen present began to consider this nature as too simple, too creole—in short, too *natural*. 'Tell them to put my horses to the carriage!' said M. de Buffon, in his most pompous tone of voice; and the poor reader stopped short a minute after. But, come, gentlemen; everybody is already in the drawing-room."

The drawing-room presented rather a singular appearance. "What is going to take place?" people asked. "We do not know," said some. "Wait a little," said others. Evidently something was preparing.

The surprise was indeed great, in every respect, which awaited the usual frequenters of the house that evening.

The Hôtel de Rambouillet, although it no longer existed for more than a century past, had left powerful recollections behind it. People laughed at its pretensions; and yet twenty other houses set up for quite as much.

Madame du Deffant, in particular, did all she could to continue it. If anything could be invented which might make the inheritance more direct, and the resemblance more distinct, she was eager to adopt it.

One day, while counting on her fingers all the celebrated persons who had made their début at her house, she began to reflect that no preacher had as yet received there that baptism of fame which had been bestowed on Bossuet and some others in the old drawing-room of Rambouillet.

This idea pursued her. Devotion—for we have seen that she had sometimes certain tendencies in that direction—chimed in with vanity. After having patronized so many infidels, it would be a sort of expiation to patronize a religious man—one who, at least, wore the appearance and the garb of religion.

But where could such a man be sought for? He must be young enough to give her all the honour of having formed him, and old enough, on the other hand—above all, talented enough—to be at once taken up by the public.

"I have found him!" said the never-failing friend, Pont-de-Veyle, one day, at last. "It is a young man from the Comtat-Venaissin, a shoemaker's son. *Ne sutor ultra crepidam*, you will say. But it is not the case; I think he is a man to belie the truth of the proverb. When quite newly landed at Paris, he was asked the other day what he had come for. 'To look for my hat,' said he. The Cardinal de Rohan laughed a good deal, I was told; he called him his colleague in embryo. Let us watch his growth, and then"—

"How old is he?"

"Sixteen or seventeen."

"He is but a child."

"You might think he was twenty. Besides, that was Bossuet's age when he made his appearance at the Hôtel de Rambouillet.

"Yes; but Bossuet—Bossuet—was Bossuet."

"Bossuet, at that age, had certainly neither more confidence in himself, nor more address."

"He had perhaps more faith."

"That is not my concern."

"Profane man!"

"Devotee!"

"Hold your tongue. What is his name?"

"Maury."

"Maury—Abbé Maury!"

"He is not an abbé yet."

"I suppose so. I am only trying the effect. Abbé Maury, Cardinal Maury. Yes; the name sounds well. Decidedly he is a man to push forward. Let us push him forward. Shall we make him extemporize a sermon?"

"A sermon!—Would you"—

"Why not? You know that was Bossuet's début."

"Yes; but"—

"What?"

"A sermon before certain gentlemen. Before d'Holbach—before Diderot, perhaps?"

"Without naming you."

"Without naming me, in truth. An edifying audience, faith!"

"That will show us whether the orator is a clever man."

"I understand you. If he acts his part as a Christian, without attacking those who are not such, we adopt him; if he thinks himself obliged to thunder against unbelievers, we shall say to him, 'My good fellow, depart in peace. Go and be a village priest, and God be with you!' That is quite understood, is it not?"

"Quite."

The very next day, a new guest appeared in her drawing-room—a young man with a high forehead and a piercing eye, who, in two hours, put himself at ease with all the authors and noblemen he found there. Where did he come from? No one would have ventured to guess by his appearance. Everything in him announced, at once, the man of the world, and the man of the people, the aristocrat and the plebeian—a happy mixture, which takes alike with the great and the little; with the latter, because every kind of greatness overawes them; with the former, because they themselves become

little before that energetic self-possession, which is only to be met with in the ranks of the people. This obscure individual was the same who was to be heard for twenty years after, witty in the pulpit, and an infidel in the drawing-room; the same who was destined to pass his youth at the feet of Voltaire, his old age at the feet of Napoleon—not, it is true, without having manifested real courage and real eloquence more than once, during the perils of the Revolution. It was Siffrein Maury, the future Cardinal Maury.

He had accepted with joy, with enthusiasm, the proposal of a trial which might raise him higher in a moment than ten years of persevering effort; no fear, no agitation even marred the prospect. His patroness asked him, "Are you not afraid of stopping short?" "Pshaw, Madam," answered Maury, "can one stop short?" The age he lived in was embodied in that reply. To know everything, to say everything, had been for forty years past the desire, the object, the folly, or the glory, as we please, of that society of which he was destined to be one of the last, but one of the most perfect representatives.

An evening had at length been fixed, and that evening had arrived. It was long before Gebelin and Rabaut understood what was going to take place. The initiated continued to smile without answering. We may be allowed to suppose that discretion was not their only motive for silence. At the Hôtel de Rambouillet in 1644, a sermon was only singular; at Madame du Deffant's in 1760, a sermon was ridiculous. Few people were willing to be mixed up with it. At last it might be judged by the attitude of the assembly that the secret was no longer a secret for anybody. Some were laughing, others shrugging their shoulders; some—the most sincerely religious, and the most candid infidels, were going away.

Great was the embarrassment of many when asked to point out a text, that the orator might draw lots. The Scrip-

tures were only known by two descriptions of persons at that period; the disciples of Jansenius, who read them for their own edification, and a little also for the pleasure of disobeying the Pope; and the disciples of Voltaire, who studied them to turn them into ridicule. "Must we not," he said once, "know the *Factum* of our adversary?" Moderate infidels, people of the world, *respectable people* in general, kept aloof from them; and what Voltaire said of Pompignan's hymns might have been said of the sacred writings:—

"Sacred they are, for no man touches them."

Many a whisper was therefore heard in the drawing-room. "A text, if you please—a text!" And those who had more than required for their own use generously gave to their neighbours. "Is that right?" people asked. "Yes, nearly." And from these reminiscences were brought out pretended verses to make Sacy, Martin, and all ancient and modern translators, Romanist or Protestant, tremble. Others wrote down boldly, imagining they quoted the Bible, some of the theophilanthropic adages of the day. "Christ was the martyr of liberty." "Hell is the heart of the wicked." "God wills the happiness of all." "But, sir," said the minister to one of his neighbours who had just written down the latter sentence, "that is not in the Bible." "That is not in the Bible? Indeed!—well, so much the worse for it." And he threw his verse into M. de Pont-de-Veyle's hat, who was busy collecting the papers.

The orator, however, had just come in. As the moment drew near, he had at last experienced the beginning of agitation. Not to stop short is a great deal; but there are people enough who do not stop short, and yet who weary their hearers. Could he flatter himself that he should have a text which might not condemn him—in spite of all his talent and

all his assurance—to weary his hearers? And if the subject was decidedly too Christian to admit of its being at all reasonably *philosophized?* And if—but his uncertainty did not last long. He plunged his hand into the hat. A deep silence prevailed.

"What hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory?"*

Such were the words written on the paper that he had just taken. But at a glance he foresaw how embarrassing would be the *why* at the close. Humility! he did not desire to preach it, any more than his audience to hear it; he therefore only read the first line aloud—"What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" It was still humility, but humility under a form that allowed of his scarcely mentioning it. He therefore scarcely said a few words upon it in his exordium; and even those few words were only there to conceal the turning aside of the subject. "It is to God that we owe every thing. By our faculties we participate in His nature, His intellect, and all His perfections. Thence those numberless prodigies that man performs in the arts and sciences, and in every path that Providence has opened out to him." Such was the substance of his beginning—an able introduction to a magnificent picture of the greatness of the human intellect.

Presented under this form, there was no subject in the world more to the taste of the day, and especially to that of the audience whom Maury had before him. The eighteenth century incontestably thought much, discovered much, and accomplished much; but also, never century was so openly the admirer of its own thoughts and works. Those who lived in it sometimes confessed it themselves. "It appears to me," said Grimm,† "that the eighteenth century has gone beyond all others in the praises it has so liberally bestowed on itself."

* 1 Cor. iv. 7.

† Correspondence, January 25, 1757.

Ours, to do it but justice, is more modest. Individual pride is the same; general pride keeps within more moderate bounds. The more improvement is rapid and progressive, the more we feel that it would be folly to say we have attained to perfection. Then men thought they were about to attain it. Superior or inferior men, all chimed in with this universal chant in which man gave honour to man; all joined hands in this triumphal and noisy dance round his pedestal.

The youthful voice that took its part in this stunning concert that evening did not want, however, for grandeur and dignity. The only fault of the sermon was the pretension of being one at all. Never had the picture of the progress of the century been more brilliantly or forcibly drawn. The surprise was great; attention eager. In his rapid review of all that had been done for a hundred years past, there was not a word, not a touch, but was calculated to win for the orator the suffrages of some one of his hearers. Artist, philosopher, man of science or of letters, by turns, he spoke to each his own language; like a sovereign who scatters rewards on his path, he knew how to give to each as he proceeded what was best suited to his taste or his pride. He named no one, he pointed out no one, and yet all eyes continually turned from him in the direction of those whose labours he exalted. He gave to each time enough to enjoy his own glory; he made all enjoy the honour of forming a part of the splendid whole.

"What labours!" said he, "what triumphs! How has the field open to our predecessors been enlarged! Formerly, it was at the decline of a long life, and hardly then, that a series of probable changes and improvements were opened out to view; now, from year to year, almost from month to month, every boundary recedes, every kind of treasure is increased. Earth has no depths, the heavens have no heights, whither the eye of man may not penetrate. Ye wandering stars, think no

longer to terrify us by your caprices! Your path is traced out. We shall await you henceforward, as we await the most docile of your companions. Four elements were left to us by our predecessors; we shall leave forty to our successors. Bring us some plant, that none have yet seen, from the extremities of the world, we shall recognise it; we shall tell you its place in the vegetable chain. Go, seek out, in the depths of the mines, a shapeless stone, a detached bone; we shall make that stone relate the history of the globe; we shall restore life to that bone, and with it shall raise before you all the generations of beings that have preceded us in the universe."

Thus did the young and brilliant sophist express himself; thus did the incense of his warm imagination burn on the altar of the eighteenth century. He ceased. His discourse had lasted nearly an hour. The pride of all had been flattered; the triumphs of all sung. Could his success be doubtful? Like those flatterers who, after having exhausted the language of praise, at last throw themselves on their knees to thank God for the virtues of their idol: "O God!" he exclaimed, "this is what our century has received at Thy hands! Thou hast chosen it to shine amongst all ages, like the cedar of Lebanon amongst the bushes that surround it, like the lily amidst the humble plants upon which it looks down, and on which it sheds its fragrance! Fly henceforth, fly, ye clouds! The reign of intellect is come! Man has escaped from thraldom! Let him advance!—and the infinite itself will bow before his triumphant steps!" The enthusiasm was great; and even Buffon himself pressed forward through the crowd to congratulate the orator.

CHAPTER VII.

Two days after, about the same hour, in a retired chamber at the archbishop's, another orator was trying his strength at the art of oratory, one which is either the highest or the lowest of all that exist. He was not a beginner: his first attempts had been made forty years before, and nevertheless: "Never," murmured he, "never did I feel as I do now! To-morrow!—to-morrow!—at St. Sulpice. *All Paris will be there*, they say. All Paris, indeed!—all *their* Paris—that mixture of false glitter, and infidelity, and vice. Paris—*all Paris!* And what shall I say to these people? It is to-morrow—and nothing is ready. Nothing there—nothing worth."

And as he spoke, he pushed from him some sheets of paper, carelessly written, crumpled, torn, covered with erasures and blots.

"But why," resumed he, "why have I taken the fancy to write? Am I made for setting phrases in order? Is it at sixty that I can learn how to do it? Let me see, however—let me see—I have lost two days in this way: my labour must at least be turned to some account."

He drew back the sheets towards him.

"This exordium—let me see.

"'At sight of an audience so new to me, the astonishment that I feel is only equalled by the fear of being too far below

what is expected from me.' *I—me—me*—self three times in one sentence. Would that happen to me in speaking? But let me go on—I shall correct afterwards.

"'How can I begin but by soliciting your indulgence? Grant it to me —' Well! once more. 'Grant it to me, my dear brethren. I am but a poor missionary. What right had I to present myself before you? Forgive' —"

"Falsehood!" cried Bridaine; and this time the papers flew to the other side of the table. "Falsehood and cowardice! Could I write that? Could I—My God! my pen has been false—like so many others! My mouth would not have been so—my heart still less. I have written it, however—I have written it. And even if I burn these sheets, I shall not the less have written them. And I have spent hours upon them! And, miserable man that I was, I saw only a few words to correct! But where was I then? What was I thinking of? Excuse myself? Ask pardon? *What right had I to present myself before you?* What right? You shall see it inscribed on my forehead, infidels!"

But suddenly a cloud seemed to pass across that very forehead where he felt that his right as minister of God was written. He bowed his head; he was silent. His eyes seemed as though they sought to penetrate some depth: that depth was his own heart.

"Yes," resumed he, "yes; I see it. And God has seen it already. It is not my pen only that is guilty. Yes—the poor missionary has been afraid. He saw himself appearing before these great lords and fine ladies, with his rough voice, his abrupt gestures, and all the exterior of a peasant. He made himself little, O God!—he forgot that when Thou art with us, we must always be great. Yes; I was afraid—I thought of myself—of—forgive me, O my God!—of my reputation—of the disappointment that might be felt in hearing

me. Miserable! miserable! even now is it quite sure that I no longer think of it?"

He remained long absorbed in this painful examination, his eyes fixed and his hands hanging down. The hours struck solemnly and slowly from the towers of Notre-Dame; but no sound reached him. At last twelve o'clock struck. At the first stroke, as if that solemn hour had vibrated differently from the others, through the galleries of the palace, Bridaine had risen. He listened; he counted.

"Midnight!" said he. "It is no longer to-morrow; it is to-day! Yet a few hours, and I shall see them—there—crowded round my pulpit. My God! my God! once more, what shall I say to them?"

He sank back on his seat. But before him, on the same table from which he had swept his sheets of paper, a book remained. On the well-worn parchment of the coarse cover might be read:—

"*Vox dicentis, Clama. Et dixi, Quid clamabo?*

"*Clama; ne cesses. Quasi tuba exalta vocem tuam; et annuntia populo meo scelera eorum, et domui Jacob peccata eorum.*"*

He himself had written these words. He loved to have them before his eyes. As ambassador of Christ, this was his letter of credit; as champion of the faith, it was his motto; and in his moments of discouragement, it was his consolation and strength. He took the book, and, without opening it, kept it long upon his knees, his eyes fixed on the encouraging yet terrible inscription.

"*Quid clamabo?*" murmured he. "Yes. 'What shall I cry?' Alas! Isaiah spoke thus before me; Moses before Isaiah. They too, before going to their work,—they too trembled. Come, let me take courage! Why should He who

* Isaiah xl. 6; lviii. 1.

sustained them, abandon me? Let me see. Where is my text? Let me read it over once more.—And God will do the rest."

He opened the book—it was the Bible—and his finger soon stopped at the verse that we saw him choose at Gebelin's, in the page saved from the fire. Then, with more confidence, he repeated :—

"*Quid clamabo?* Here is that which I shall cry! 'God hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world.' He hath *appointed* a day. Yes—that is what I shall say. *Appointed!—appointed!* When? It matters not. There is, in the course of ages, a day appointed, irrevocably appointed, in which you shall appear before God. There is a day when all your crimes will appear before you, written, written for eternity in the flaming book of justice, in the book—No, they are familiar with these fearful images. I mean to show them that this book is their own heart; that it is there they will one day see, as by a flash of lightning, all the falsehoods and vices that they are heaping up there. God will judge—yes; but not as man judges. He will have but to restore to the wicked the consciousness that they have lost, and each will become at once his own accuser, judge, and executioner. *Appointed!—appointed!* See it, as it advances, surrounded as yet by mists, but certain, inexorable, the day that you will be plunged into the abyss! Do you see it—My God! do I myself contemplate it sufficiently? Have I myself sufficiently felt that terror which I desire to impress upon others? Have I often enough said to myself that Thou wilt weigh in the eternal balance my weaknesses, hesitations, all—even to the very words that escape from me at this moment!"

He was again silent. His clasped hands had fallen upon the book; his forehead had sunk upon his hands; his eyes were closed. Soon, under the double pressure of fatigue and

meditation, he fell asleep, but it was that half slumber in which the activity of the body seems transferred to the mind.

He then felt as if transported into another world, where all the false virtues, all the vices and crimes that he had condemned in the present, were brought to life again under visible forms. He recognised them by the very lineaments under which he himself had depicted them. It was no longer earth; it was not hell. These spectres were neither joyful nor sorrowful. They advanced in silence, their eyes fixed as it were on some object. Some brandished axes, others affected to show their hands unarmed, and yet a hidden poignard might be perceived under the graceful folds of their girdle.

And these spectres went on, and on, as those who have business on their hands. And Bridaine went on and on along with them, as those do who have something to see.

And a sort of psalmody from above mingled with the steps of these demons.

"He hath made the winds his angels, the flames his messengers.

"He hath visited kings, because kings have sinned.

"He hath punished the nations, because the nations have sinned.

"Sow, sow the wind, and ye shall reap the whirlwind.

"Sow, sow death, and ye shall reap death.

"He hath made the winds his angels, the flames his ministers."

But the spectres listened not. They went on, on still; and those who bore axes brandished them yet more boldly; and those who had poignards drew them; and out of the heart of the mists whither they all plunged in confusion, a lofty and majestic statue, on a high pedestal, rose up.

Over its head, in letters like stars, might be read,

LIBERTY.

And upon the rock that supported it,

GOD.

Then they fell on their knees before it, and all cried out: "Liberty, come to us, come to us! Come down! come down!"—but the statue remained motionless. Then they rushed against the pedestal, and all cried out; "Throw it down! throw it down!"—but the pedestal remained unshaken. Then all the hatchets were raised, and all cried out; "Break it in pieces! break it in pieces!"—but the hatchets were blunted against the hard granite; the name of God was lighted up by the sparks that flew out of the resisting stone at its contact with the iron.

"Brethren," said one of those who worked, "what shall we do?"

"What shall we do?" they repeated.

"Brethren," resumed he, "let us begin by raising another pedestal."

Then they set to work. Some brought materials, others built, others erected round the statue the scaffolding by means of which they purposed to take it down. And from the top of the scaffolding, some cried, "Is it ready?" And those at the bottom answered, "No." Then they hastened to overturn another throne, or another altar. And they brought the fragments and piled them all up together; and at last they reached the height of the former pedestal. And upon the different sides of the new one, which they had made to imitate granite, they wrote—

HONOUR.—PATRIOTISM.—EQUALITY.—FRATERNITY.

Then, amidst the acclamations of the crowd, they took down the statue, and carried it in triumph to its new pedestal; they placed it there. But instantly it shook, leaned forward, and fell; and the fragments mingled with those very fragments of

which they had thought to make a throne for it; and a plaintive voice from above responded to the noise of the earth that had been shaken—

"Wo, wo to those that trust in man!

"They have thought to seat Liberty on the virtues and triumphs of man. It is fallen, and great has been its ruin.

"Wo, wo to those that trust in man!"

Then there was a great division amongst those who had accomplished the work. Some threw away their hatchets, and clung to the granite that they would have overturned. They struck their penitent foreheads against it; they kissed it piously. To those, a voice within said, that henceforth Liberty should have its seat in their hearts. Others had closed their eyes, that they might not see; and had stopped their ears at the first sound of the voice from above. They were condemned to search for ever. They sought then, they sought for ever. They searched amidst the ruins with their hatchets, and the fragments of Liberty shivered, like the rest, beneath the blind fury of their blows. And a mist, which increased continually, rose up around them. And they were heard to curse each other; and to the sound of curses succeeded the sound of arms; to the sound of arms, cries and tears; and then, a fearful silence.

And in the darkness might be descried, as it were, a statue seated. Its feet were bathed in blood. Its left hand held chains; its right, a sceptre of iron.

It was Despotism, seated in peace upon the ruins of all right and all truth. Now it might be seen wearing a royal crown, now a red cap, now its rags changed to purple robes, its purple robes to rags. The sceptre alone was always of iron. And a powerful but plaintive voice, like that of a multitude of nations, rose from time to time. "How long, Lord!" it said, "How long!"

And the answer came immediately :—" Repent and be converted, and ye shall find rest for your souls." But the multitude listened not; and Bridaine repeated, after the voice from on high, " Repent and be converted!" And the voice resumed, " Will those hearken to man who have not hearkened to God?" And Bridaine cried yet louder, " Repent and be converted!"

But nothing could now be seen but an awful confusion. All things seemed to change their names; good was called evil, and evil good. Truth lent its aid to falsehood, falsehood to truth. People spoke, but they no longer heard each other speak; they touched each other, but without being able to see. And all things were rolled together in an awful whirlwind; and Bridaine held, terrified, by the book on which he had leaned his head. And when his eyes opened again at last, he saw nothing by the light of his almost extinguished lamp, but these words of the burnt paper :—" God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world."

Whilst the preacher was watching and praying at the archbishop's, others were watching at St. Sulpice; but they were not praying.

Many people of rank had sent their servants to pass the night in the church. This was the only way to secure seats on great occasions; besides, it was the fashion, and that was reason enough. That share indeed, which fashion cannot but have in matters of religion, is naturally greater in proportion as the times are less religious, and religion is more a matter of propriety and outward form than anything else. This observation, though in itself just, has not always been well applied. It has been agreed, for instance, to attribute to fashion all the piety, or outward appearance of piety, that there was in France during the latter years of the reign of Louis XIV.

That Louis XIV. encouraged, and if needful, even com-

manded these manifestations, is a fact. It is well known what the influence of a king can do, above all of a king like him, whom fashion herself, the most independent of all powers, was accustomed to obey. It is, however, going rather too far to attribute to him all the devotion and devout persons that appeared at the close of his reign. Under the outward exhibitions that were commanded, there existed some reality,—we will not say of piety, but of pious habits, and feelings easily touched. All those people who communicated publicly to please Louis XIV., we may be sure, would have done the same thing—secretly perhaps, and with some embarrassment—but still they would have done it for their own sake, or for the sake of their wives and children.

Let us not forget, either, that these external forms long survived the old king. After all that we know of the infidelity and immorality of the last century, we have some difficulty in imagining the churches otherwise than empty, the priests laughed at, and the ceremonies of public worship turned into ridicule. It would be a complete mistake. People had ceased, it is true, to affect religious sentiments, for they would have gained nothing by it but ridicule; but outward religious duties were generally as well attended to as ever. Only professed infidels, and their numbers were small, had broken off all intercourse with the Church. Even amongst them, very few on their deathbeds refused to be reconciled to her; many did not wait till it came to that. The same people who laughed at the mass in the evening attended it next morning, talked impiety with libertine abbés, and theology with sincere priests. They confessed to the latter the follies they had been guilty of with the former. And as for the most easy of all religious duties—hearing a sermon, it was but natural to take care not to miss it, provided the preacher had the reputation of a man of talent or an eccentric man.

The latter kind of reputation, as we have seen, was that of Bridaine. For some days past he had been much talked of; both his good qualities and his defects had, therefore, been magnified proportionally in the imagination of the public. Those who had heard him at Versailles wished to hear him at Paris; those who expected him at Paris, sighed for the moment when they should see him in the pulpit.

According to his custom, he was to preach at night-fall, and the church from mid-day had been full. The chairs had been let out by the persons whose office it was, at prices that were raised from hour to hour. Many who had come there in order to speculate, offered theirs, happy to sell at a crown what had cost them a quarter of a livre; and more than one honest citizen, after having long hesitated between God and mammon, had ended by allowing himself to be seduced by the louis-d'or of the Marquis or of the financier.

The assembly, therefore, by this time comprised only the rich, the great, and men of letters, even in the seats the farthest off. Helvetius, whom no one could surpass in the art of making himself everywhere at home, had hired a whole chapel, and was gallantly doing the honours of it to all the philosophers, artists, and literary characters that he could perceive amongst the crowd. As we see, he paid little attention to the order of waiting a month or two before reappearing in public. But who did obey in those times? A few insignificant individuals at the utmost.

On all sides conversation was going on actively, but no where so actively as in the aforesaid chapel. What is there to do in a *church* but *talk*, for such people as Helvetius, Grimm, d'Holbach, and *tutti quanti?* They appeared, indeed, sufficiently astonished to see themselves there. At each new arrival, it might have been guessed by their looks, that the first

words interchanged invariably turned upon their mutual surprise.

. . . . . .

"Well?"

"Well?"

"You took holy water, I suppose?"

"Yes, indeed."

"And made the sign of the cross?"

"Yes."

"Very edifying."

"One must follow the fashion."

"And make a fool of one's-self with fools? By no means."

. . . . . .

"There is some one in that confessional, I think."

"It is that Maury—you know—of the other evening."

"Ah! How do you do, M. Maury? I have not as yet complimented you."

"Sir!"

"But how thoroughly you have settled yourself! Paper, pens"—

"I am going to try to write the sermon."

"Not a bad idea."

. . . . . .

"A thousand thanks, sir; I was very ill off in that mob. Thanks to you, I have one of the best seats."

"I am glad to have had it in my power to serve you."

"You are in the habit of serving your friends. Who have you lodged in that little seat apart?"

"Where?"

"There, on the left."

"I had not even observed it. It seems, indeed, that some one has just been shown there."

Who was this some one?

About two hours before this conversation, a carriage, with Richelieu's arms, had left Versailles at a quick trot, conveying the Marshal and the king. The preparations for this frolic had saved him two or three days of his habitual *ennui*. The Marchioness, though informed of it by Richelieu, had acted ignorance admirably. The king had received, with visible satisfaction, her compliments on his good spirits, and his good spirits had increased from hour to hour, from the very idea that he had succeeded so well in avoiding all suspicion.

As he rarely failed paying, for the few moments of comfort he had succeeded in enjoying, by a double measure of *ennui*, he had scarcely set out before his countenance darkened. Every thing changed its aspect in his sight. He had been amused at escaping from the Marchioness; and now he asked himself bitterly, what a king was worth who needed to escape from a woman, like a schoolboy from his teacher, or a slave from his master. He had enjoyed this sermon in prospect as a party of pleasure, and now the serious part of the thing appeared to him in all its reality. What was he going to do at Paris? To hear threatenings that would terrify him, but would not make him change his life; warnings that could teach him nothing new as to the state of his soul, and would, after all, only serve to make him still more inexcusable before God. For a long time past, he had despaired of his own strength; he had no longer the resource of saying to himself that he would one day change his life—a resource which, though often deceitful, is at least consoling. Such as he was, such he felt that he must appear before God, as an indolent king, a man loaded with vices, a heart completely seared.

This very despair, however, turned to account by a man like Bridaine, might yet become a means of rescue. A remedy applied with energy has often the greater effect, just as the disease is more serious, the more completely rooted.

At Versailles, in his own chapel, the word of God never reached him but like music more or less monotonous—more suited to lull than to awaken his conscience. Besides, there, surrounded by homage, more honoured than God Himself, to listen to a sermon was only a matter of etiquette; whether the discourse was weak or powerful, it was all one to his kingly ears. At Paris, in a spacious church, mingled with the crowd, reminded by the general nature both of instructions and threatenings, of the feeling of equality before God, he might still be touched; he might return to his palace with a little more energy of mind, a little more life at heart.

His evil angel, under the form of his confessor, awaited him on the threshold of the church.

Richelieu had considered it impossible to bring the king there incognito, without the priest of the church being in the secret. The priest had offered a retired seat in the chapel, where we have just seen Helvetius and his party. It had been agreed that a priest should be stationed as sentinel at the little outer door, by which they were to come in. In fact, they did find a priest there; but that priest was Desmarêts.

"You here!" said the king.

"Sire, as well I as another. The priest commissioned me."

"Commissioned—commissioned!" muttered the Marshal; "did he know whether it would suit the king that you should see him at Paris?"

"At all events, Sire, I am ready to go away."

The king went in, without replying. A small staircase led up to the private seat. There was room for three; but Richelieu so managed that there was none left for the confessor. Desmarêts remained standing. What signified an affront to him? He had his own plan.

Concealed by a grating, the king examined the crowd with curiosity, first from a distance, then nearer, and his eyes rested

gradually on the people who were talking below him. He at last distinguished Helvetius, who had, as we may remember, belonged to the Court, in the capacity of *maître d'hôtel* to the queen.

"I think we are at a full meeting of the Encyclopædia!" said he to the Duke.

The Duke smiled. "Ah! ha! your Majesty has guessed it. I saw it as we came in."

"And you said nothing to me?"

"I was afraid that the neighbourhood might displease"—

"And also a little afraid that you might appear too well acquainted with these gentlemen; is not that the truth?"

"I do not know them all."

"No; only the leading men, and half of the subalterns. Come, point out some of them to me."

"Willingly, Sire. Beside Helvetius"—

"There, he has just let in another. Who is it?—What! Our Protestant of the petition! Do they know each other?"

"Infidelity is the sister of heresy," said Desmarêts solemnly. "To tolerate one"—

"Beside M. Helvetius," interrupted Richelieu, "there is the Baron d'Holbach, then, on the right, the old Baroness du Deffant, flanked by her Pont-de-Veyle, whom your Majesty has heard something of. There is M. d'Alembert of the Academy of Sciences."

"I know him," said the king, with an absent look.

Richelieu went on, but the king no longer listened to him. Like a general who contemplates in alarm the enemy's army, what did he care for the names of the soldiers? Known or unknown, weak or strong, they were soldiers, it was an army; they were that tide to which God alone has the right and power to say, "Ye shall go no further!" That was indeed a formidable army, of which all the soldiers might have been

fettered, one by one, without its being prevented from advancing, increasing, and invading. The king might have shut up for life each one of the men that he had before his eyes, between four walls. But he had no longer faith in walls. The new ideas were in the very air.

Thus he grew more and more gloomy as he contemplated in silence these destroyers of his throne, till at last a great stir roused him from his reverie. The hour had just struck; the ranks opened before the staff of a beadle who led the way to the pulpit, followed by a priest with white hair.

It was he.

He ascended it, and with that look which carries with it silence to the very extremities of the crowd, he cast his eyes twice over the whole extent of the church. Then slowly and solemnly, but with a voice which made itself heard even to the furthest corners of the edifice, he said:—

"At the sight of an audience so new to me, it would seem, my brethren, that I ought only to open my lips to ask your indulgence on behalf of a poor missionary, devoid of all those talents that you require in those who come to speak to you of your eternal salvation.

"To-day, however, I experience a different feeling; and if I am humbled, beware of thinking that I descend to the miserable anxieties of vanity. God forbid that a minister of heaven should ever think he needs an apology in your presence, for, whoever you may be, you are but sinners like myself. It is before your God and mine that I feel at this moment how much I need to strike upon my breast.

"I have published the judgments of the Highest in temples covered with thatch. I have preached the rigours of penance to the destitute who wanted bread; I have made sorrowful the heart of the poor, the best friends of my God; I have carried fear and distress to those hearts whom I seemed called

upon to console. It was my duty, and I fulfilled it. Wo unto me if I had believed, or allowed to be believed, that sin under a roof of thatch is sheltered from condemnation!

"But it is here,—where my eyes rest only on the great, the rich, on hardened and confident sinners,—ah! it is here that the sacred word must sound forth in all the power of its thunders; it is here that I must place beside me in this pulpit, on the one hand, the death which threatens you, and on the other, the Almighty God who is coming to judge you.

"I hold your sentence in my hand this day. Tremble, then, before me, ye proud and disdainful! The necessity of deliverance, the certainty of death, the uncertainty of that awful hour, final impenitence, the last judgment, the small number of the elect, hell"—

"Hell!" whispered Desmarêts, almost in the ear of the king.

"—and above all, a whole eternity"—

"Eternity!" repeated the Jesuit.

"—these are the subjects on which I am going to address you; and which, thanks be to God, I feel less than ever disposed to soften.

"And what need have I of your applause, which would be my destruction perhaps, and would not save your souls? God Himself must touch your hearts, whilst His unworthy minister speaks to you; for I know His mercies by experience. Then, penetrated with horror for your past iniquities, you will come and throw yourselves at my feet, whilst you shed tears of repentance and contrition, and the strength of your own remorse will make me appear to you sufficiently eloquent."

A murmur ran through the crowd. Did the orator think he had struck home? He would have been mistaken. That murmur signified, "Well!—very well!" It was the intellect that admired; it was not the heart that acknowledged itself

vanquished. Back to your task, poor missionary, back to your task! You have effected nothing as yet, nothing but a fine burst of eloquence, which yonder youth, the orator of yesterday, will arrange to-morrow in his own way, in order to produce it ridiculously *philosophized*, to the bravos of an infidel age.*

There was one man there, however, on whose heart these words had left an impression. That man was the king. The words *eternity*, *hell*, specially the latter, were the only ones that had retained power to act on his imagination. He could divert his mind and not listen to them; but he could not listen to them without shuddering, or seeming to see the reflection of the eternal flames cast over all around him. It was from the senses that he sought his happiness in this world; it was from the senses that he expected his punishment in the next. His confessors had done nothing to inspire him with fears of a higher character. They were glad to have at least one spring left that would act, and had taken little pains to raise him above the weak terrors of the senses. It little mattered to them whether he loved God or not, provided he continued to fear the devil.

Such, then, was the feeling of which Desmarêts had watched the progress on his countenance during the exordium of the sermon; such was the feeling that he had done his best to excite by his awful and sinister interruptions, and his fearful tenacity in repeating the words of the orator.

Hence the king's mind took a false direction. All that Bridaine was about to say that was grand or terrible, he was about to bring down to the standard of his terrified and childish imagination. Yet a little more agitation, and Desmarêts would attempt a great stroke. The king would not be con-

* We know that this famous exordium, such as Maury has recorded it, is more his than Bridaine's.

verted, but he would submit. God would not be satisfied, but the Jesuits would.

The object, as we have related, was to manage that the king should openly declare himself for them. But it was necessary first to bring him to bind his own cause to theirs · it was necessary, above all, to mould him thoroughly to the obedience that they wanted from him. With minds destitute of energy, to have once yielded is a reason for yielding again.

This was why Desmarêts was so anxious to annihilate the project of an edict favourable to the Huguenots. His hatred against them was not, then, at this moment, his only or even his principal motive. He wished that the giving up this intention should be connected in the king's mind with scruples and fears that might subsequently be turned to account for another purpose.

Had Bridaine acted in concert with him, he could not have served his purpose better, for he followed up, with fearful exactness, the plan traced out in his exordium. His first part treated of death.

"We must die!" he said; and he communicated to these words an expression which of itself gave to an assertion so common and familiar something new and striking. It was no longer a mortal announcing to others that fate which is his own likewise; it was a messenger from on high pronouncing a sentence.

"We must die! How hard does that word sound to the ear of man; hard to those who have enjoyed much; hard, above all, to him who has sinned without enjoyment, to him who has lost his time for this world and the next.

"We must die! When? We are happy, we are told, in being ignorant of it. Happy to be ignorant of it! Happy, yes indeed, happy! but only if you think of death, if you think

of it continually, if you can defy it to surprise or alarm you, at whatever hour it may come. But if you never think of it, if you never approach the idea but when it is put before your eyes, when we, as it were, lay hold of you with both hands, to prevent your turning away from it; if, in short, even then, you only gain by this contemplation a vague and vain feeling of terror—oh! then, to be ignorant of the moment of death, is the first punishment of your crimes, is the first link of the inexorable chain which a God of vengeance will bind for ever around you. To be ignorant of the moment of death! Yes, for the righteous it is a blessing, because he prepares for it every hour; and the emotions of a deathbed, which are able to accomplish so many marvels in a moment, last with him twenty, forty years, a whole lifetime. But for the wicked, for the ungodly, for whosoever forgets or defies God, this very ignorance is but the beginning of that darkness which is to spread for ever over his eyes, that are unworthy of the light. Once, only once, the lightning will break through the cloud. When the moment arrives that the soul shall be separated from the body, that has debased and ruined it, then, for an instant, there will be a great light. Time which has ended, and eternity which begins, will at once be lighted up. On the one hand, the past without God; on the other, the future without God. Here, remorse; there, torments. And when the guilty soul has seen clearly, has measured the past thoroughly, and understood fully that the future is henceforth not to be measured, then all will return into eternal obscurity. Go on, guilty soul—go on for ever. Go on as if thou wert seeking, but thou knowest that thou shalt find nothing. Go on as if thou didst hope, but thou knowest that there is hope no longer. The only possession that might have rendered thy misery endurable, has been taken from thee at the threshold. Where eternity begins, hope ends!"

Thus spoke Bridaine. Was he quite right? Ought the hell of Dante to be that of the Christian theologian? At all events, he is but a poor Christian who requires to be stimulated by the dread of eternal punishment, to think a little of his soul, and to avoid going too far in sin!

But such Christians are necessarily numerous at a period of sensuality and emotion, when people pass easily from impiety to bigotry, from indifference to macerations.

The impression, consequently, was deep and universal. It made its way even into the chapel of Helvetius. More than one of the leaders of the infidelity of the day, surprised himself shuddering, and saying, "What if it were true!"

But the king did not say *if*. His terrified gaze plunged, as it were, with a feverish eagerness into all the depths that the missionary opened out. He felt his forehead burning with the heat of the flames that Bridaine had called up in imagination. His head became confused; his faculties, worn out by debauchery and dissipation, swam in an ocean of horrors. And Desmarêts leaned over him and held him spell-bound by his fixed gaze. And he seemed to see, on that unchanging face, the laugh of a demon who contemplates the torments of the damned.

All at once, he threw himself back; he seized Desmarêts' arm with his clenched hand.

"Save me!" he murmured. "Save me!"

But Desmarêts appeared not to listen.

"Sire," said Richelieu, "compose yourself. You will be heard."

"Save me!" he said a second time.

"What can I do?" said Desmarêts, coldly.

"Much!—much!"

"Nothing."

"Nothing!—O God!—Nothing!"

"Nothing, so long as"—

He bent down to the king's ear.

"What have you done with that edict?"

"The edict?"

"Yes. Do not hope to appease God while you league with His enemies. That edict is already inscribed in letters of fire, on the book of your sins. It is there, for eternity!"

And while he spoke, the fearful voice of the missionary was heard sounding through the increasing darkness.

"Eternity!" said he, "eternity!—Know you what is eternity? A shoreless sea; a boundless desert; a bottomless gulf. It is still time, but time becomes stationary as before the creation. It lasts, and yet it has no duration; it passes on, and yet it never passes away. And there are the damned obliged to measure it. And, from time to time, a lamentable voice is heard, crying, 'What time is it?' and the voice of another wretched being answers—'Eternity!'"

"Take it," said the king hastily, "take it—take it. Tear it up. Eternity! Good God!—Eternity! Tear it up—tear it up."

And the project of the edict fell, torn in pieces, at the feet of the Jesuit.

The charm was broken. The king had just paid his ransom. Does not the blood of heretics open the way to heaven?

He was already calmer. All his terrors had melted away beneath the magic influence of an expiation at the expense of others.

The next day, he himself related to his mistress, in the enchanting shrubberies of Bellevue, the story of the gloomy sermon.

CHAPTER VIII.

Sixteen months had elapsed since the last events we have related.

Persecution had resumed its course. At Toulouse, five Protestants were about to suffer death. Several had been sent to the galleys at Marseilles and Toulon.

The number of women torn from their families and shut up in convents, was so considerable, as not to be accurately known; and at the Tower of Constance, at Aigues-Mortes, where the number of female prisoners had been reduced to nineteen, there were at this time five-and-twenty—as many as it could hold.

It is to this prison we must conduct our readers.

Two large circular chambers, situated one above the other, occupied the whole tower. The lower one admitted no other light but that which reached it from the upper, through a round hole of about six feet in diameter; the upper one was lighted by a similar hole, in the centre of the ceiling, opening out upon the terrace at the top of the tower. It was by these apertures alone that the smoke escaped and the air came in; and with the air, the cold, the wind, and rain.

There, in the middle of the eighteenth century, imprisoned by royal authority, enforced by that of the Church, lived and died some poor women, whose only crime it was, to have gone to offer their prayers to God in the Desert, or to have sent

their children thither. Several, as we have seen, had been at Aigues-Mortes for fifteen, twenty, five-and-twenty years; Marie Durand for nearly thirty; Anne Gaussaint for almost thirty-eight.

Solicitations had perseveringly been made on their behalf, but in vain. Protestants, Romanists, their own countrymen and foreigners—all who dared speak, had exhausted their influence in these efforts. The more innocent they were, as we have already observed, the more it would have been dreaded, that to grant their liberation, might appear an acknowledgment of that innocence.

Great alleviations, however, had been gradually introduced into the internal regulations of their prison. The inhabitants of Aigues-Mortes manifested the warmest interest in the prisoners; and as there was no instance—we have not, at least, met with the slightest indication of it—of any one of them abjuring, even the clergy let them at last alone. The Cordeliers, whose office it was to convert them, now only brought them news from without, alms, clothing, Christian consolation, which they had learned, in intercourse with them, to separate from any of the alloy of the Church of Rome. At last, a Bible had been admitted! Their friends and relations could sometimes visit them. They received and wrote letters; we have seen Marie Durand corresponding with Rabaut. Other pastors also wrote to them. These precious messages were always read in common. Tears then fell involuntarily from their eyes, but they were not bitter like those they had so often shed in time past; they seemed for a moment to breathe, within those massive walls, the vivifying air of the Desert.

One day, or rather evening, at the hour when these poor prisoners were usually on their pallets—for no other light but that of the sun was in general allowed them—a great and joyful stir prevailed in the Tower of Constance.

All the captives were assembled in the lower chamber, which was lighted by a lamp. The beds were untouched; one only, that of the aged Anne Gaussaint, who had been long infirm, was occupied; but the invalid, in a sitting posture, followed with her eyes all the movements of her companions. Her features, withered by age and suffering, were lighted up by the reflection of their happiness.

They had just drawn all the beds to one side of the room. In the vacant space, an old arm-chair was placed with its back to the wall. Before the arm-chair was a table, upon it an old table-cover, on which lay a large Bible, the corners of which were well worn. Finally, before this table, some chairs and stools—all the worn furniture of the prison. All was ready. The prisoners were moving restlessly to and fro. They seemed to regret having nothing more to do.

"Marie, what o'clock is it?"

"Six o'clock has just struck at the Cordeliers' church. We have still time before us."

"Unfortunately."

"The later he comes, the later he will stay."

"Do you think so?"

"I hope so. It does not appear, at least, that the Major* has fixed an hour for his going out."

"That good Major! what should we do without him?"

"If his conduct towards us was known, he would soon lose his place."

"It is indeed going far. A pastor admitted into the tower! and the king's lieutenant letting him come in and go out!"

"Come in, yes. Go out"—

"Gracious God! that idea never occurred to me. Do you fear a snare? M. d'Ambly is honour itself."

"He seems so."

* The Governor of the tower.

"Have you any suspicions?"

"Nothing, absolutely nothing; and yet, it would not be the first time."

Marie forgot that she was speaking to Bruyn's mother, *Judas* Bruyn—for by that name he was still called. She saw her eyes fill with tears.

"Forgive me," said she, "forgive me! what was I thinking of?—let us say no more about it."

"No; let us speak of it. Unhappy child! Since we have been expecting the one he purposed to betray, I can think of nothing but him. Where is he? What is he doing?"

"M. Rabaut knows, perhaps."

"Perhaps. But who will venture to ask him?—not I.'

"Are you responsible for the—the"—

"The crime, you would say."

"—— for your son's fault?"

"No; and yet I tremble at the thought of seeing M. Rabaut come in; to think that he might have died—died by the hand of the executioner—he—our father—our chief consolation next to God—and that my son might have been the cause of his death! Ah! Marie, you see it is like a weight, a dreadful weight, that nothing can take off my heart. If he was there, speaking kindly to me, even forgiving my son, I should still look for traces of the horror that our name must excite in him. The door is opening. Gracious God! is it he?"

It was the Major, making his rounds. He was supposed not to be aware of the serious infringement on the rules of the prison that he was about to permit. He therefore only appeared for an instant, otherwise he could not have helped seeing that the beds had been displaced.

"Decidedly he favours us," said one of the prisoners.

"He looked very gloomy," said another.

"Very thoughtful," said a third.

"Any one might be so, even with less cause. He risks the loss of his place to-night."

"And on our account. Well, what is the matter, Marie?"

"Nothing—nothing."

"But what then?"

"Nothing—I wish it was to-morrow."

The door opened again. It was Rabaut.

Need we say what an event this visit was to the prisoners?

Some of them had known him. To those, it was almost as though an angel had appeared in the prison. Many of them, and Marie was of the number, had never seen him; but for twenty years past they had heard him spoken of. To the desire of receiving the consolations of the pastor, was therefore united the wish of seeing a remarkable man, the hero of so many tales, the centre of those astonishing chronicles, where their unknown names figured beside his.

But if for twenty years past they had known and repeated his name, he had known that of their prison much longer, and his imagination had traced its dark history. Although the female prisoners of Aigues-Mortes were not worse off, on the whole, than many others, they had the privilege of exciting a more especial interest. A tower famous throughout the country, an old castle, a memorial of the times of the Crusades,* all concurred to give something dramatic, at a distance, to the humble existence of these captives. In imagination, Rabaut had a thousand times passed through those gates; he knew the lives and histories of all these women whom he was about to see. He felt by his own emotion, that he should recognise those whom he had never seen.

They had at first rushed towards the door, but a feeling of

* The fortifications of Aigues-Mortes, commenced under St. Louis, were finished under his son, Philip the Bold. A letter from Pope Clement IV. to that prince, in which he praised his constancy in building them, was the reason for giving the name of Constance to the principal tower, which it has retained.

respect held them back. They had formed, mechanically, a large semicircle round him. Some had fallen on their knees—not before the man, but before God, for their eyes were turned upwards, and their lips moved in prayer; others saw only him, and could as yet think only of him.

He, too, was silent and motionless. His eyes were now turned heavenwards, now towards them. His hands were joined in prayer, and then stretched out to bless them. Only some stifled sobs were heard, and, at intervals, the voice of the aged Anne Gaussaint, who murmured her old hymn—

"Lord, let Thy servant now depart
Into Thy promised rest."

At length the pastor came forward. He had observed the table, the arm-chair, and the Bible; he wished, before speaking to them, to address that God for whose sake they had suffered so much.

His idea was understood. When he reached the table, and stood behind it, they knelt in two rows, a few steps before him.

Then he began to pray, but this time it was aloud. He prayed —shall we try to repeat his words? He prayed, as one might pray in such a place and such an assembly, who hazarded his life daily to comfort others, and pray with them.

"O God!" he said; "O our Father!—Our hearts were united at a distance—our thoughts met when ascending to Thy throne. Thou hast permitted that our voices, as well as our hearts, should for once ascend together. O what shall we render unto Thee, Lord! what shall we do for Thee, who hast done so much for us? Alas! poor sinners that we are, our very gratitude is a snare to us. We spend all the love that we possess in returning Thee thanks for the favour of to-day; we forget, that before granting it, Thou wast just as much our Protector, Father, Saviour, God. What is this

benefit compared with those which thou hast poured out upon us in the Gospel? What are these few beams of joy that have entered this spot to-day, compared with the Sun of Righteousness—always shining, always visible to those who look heavenwards? Thus, O God, at the very moment that we feel ourselves wholly Thine, we yet need that Thou shouldest direct and raise our thoughts; even in ascending towards Thee, our spirits may go astray. Come, Lord, teach us Thyself the way that leads to Thee. May flesh and blood have no part in the worship that Thou permittest us to offer Thee to-day. It is the first—it is, according to all human appearances, perhaps the last time that we shall pray to Thee together; grant that we may be here such as we shall be in heaven."

He sat down. The women, who had been kneeling till then, rose, and he signed to them to be seated. But they did not sit down; and when he took the book, they again knelt.

Scarcely had he touched that Bible, when a new feeling of emotion was visible in his countenance. He had recognised it. It was the old Bible of the Bruyns. On opening it, he had lighted upon the famous mark dyed with blood; and a woman, hid behind the others, had burst into sobs.

"This treasure here!" said he. "To expose such an inheritance!"

"Who would have received it?" murmured the woman. "I have no longer a son."

Rabaut turned almost a smiling look upon her. "It is written," said he, "that even of stones God can raise up children to those who serve Him."

"Great God!" exclaimed she; "shall I see my son again?"

"I do not know if you may see him again; you may love him."

"Is he alive?"

"Yes."

"Has he repented?"

"Yes."

"Have you forgiven him?"

"I have; and God before me. Be calm. This Bible, when it goes out from hence, will return into pure hands. Let us read, sisters; let us read together."

He then read to them, in St. John, the Saviour's farewell to His apostles. It was, of the whole Bible, the part which they had read the most frequently over and over again. There were so many things in those admirable chapters which seemed written for them. They knew them by heart; and yet, in his mouth, they seemed new. They almost asked themselves whether he was adding nothing to them. What could he have added? Was not everything there—hope, consolation, all?

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

"As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

"And ye now therefore have sorrow; but I will see you

again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

"Holy Father, I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world; but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may be one, even as we are one."*

At the latter words he paused.

"Do you hear, my sisters?" said he—"'*One with God!*' That is the great privilege—that is the great mystery. '*One with God!*'—What, then, does the hatred or the violence of man signify to us? Like Him, we are above them. What does the misery of time signify to us? In tearing from us our temporal possessions, the wicked will only have succeeded in opening to us a little sooner the gates of eternity."

He liked this grand idea; he enlarged upon it for a long time. At last, "Sisters," pursued he, "this is union with God; if you wish it, let us realize it. Let this table become the Lord's table. Where is the bread? where is the wine?"

They had thought of it. To communicate was their most eager desire. The sacred elements were brought forward. The bread was in an earthenware dish; the wine in a pewter goblet.

"We have nothing more costly," said Marie.

"So much the better. Had Jesus more?"

They wished to kneel.

"No," said Rabaut; "let us do as in the Desert. Rise; and when I call you, draw near."

After a few moments' silent prayer, he began.

A Protestant in our day was asked how the Lord's Supper was celebrated in his church; "Ask St. Paul," said he. And we, too, should any one ask us how they received

* John xiv. 1, 16, 17, 27; xv. 9, 18, 20; xvi. 22; xvii. 15, 17, 21.

the communion that day, in the Tower of Constance, would reply, "Ask St. Paul."

"For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

"After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." *

Have you read it? have you recognised the mass there? And if you were really seeking not the mass, but the Lord's Supper in reality, where would you find it—on your gilded altars, or on those tables which you are taught to turn into ridicule? Where would St. Paul have been most at home, under the ceiled roof of St. Peter's at Rome, or in the smoky chamber of the Tower of Aigues-Mortes?

The Protestant liturgy is drawn up, as we know, from St. Paul's narrative, and the exhortations he has added to it. When the minister had pronounced the words of consecration, the prisoners defiled in order before him. To each one, as he presented the bread and wine, he addressed, according to custom, one or two verses of Scripture, by way of exhortation. Then, he went to Anne Gaussaint's bed; she was eagerly waiting for her turn—her eyes, her soul, her whole being, seemed to have gone forth to welcome the heavenly bread. She had already received it, when she fell back on her pillow, exhausted and breathless—and repeating, in still lower accents:—

"Lord, let Thy servant now depart
Into Thy promised rest."

* 1 Cor. xi. 23-26.

Then at last, when they had prayed together once more, Rabaut drew near to the prisoners. He related to Bruyn's mother, where and how he had found her son; he added that which we have not yet had an opportunity of mentioning, how Bruyn had been brought out of prison.

He owed it to Bridaine. Convinced of his innocence in the unpleasant affair with the Marquis de Narniers, the missionary had set to work courageously. Joly de Fleury, the attorney-general, Voltaire's aversion, detested the reformed religion at least as much as he did impiety; but after all he was a just man. He listened to Bridaine; he questioned the Marquis, and the latter, who already purposed saving Bruyn, completely cleared up the business. But as he could not have been set at liberty without very complicated negotiations taking place between the Parliaments of Paris and Toulouse, it had been agreed that Bruyn should be removed from his prison, as if to be taken back to his former judges, and that he should escape on the road. This took place; he returned to Paris, and under a false name, Gebelin had placed him with his bookseller, instead of the clerk who had informed on the subject of the books. There, under Gebelin's direction, he had made rapid progress in the good path that God had opened out for him once more; but with his former faith, his former zeal had returned. He could not long contine in the obscure occupations of a shop; he had requested to be employed as helper to the pastors, in the extensive circuits that were made from time to time amongst the scattered Protestants of the north and west.

For several months past, he had been at work, and had already reorganized more than one little flock which had long been lost sight of. To the happiness of labouring for the cause of the Church was added that of endeavouring to re-establish his own character; for he did not as yet consider

himself absolved. That could only be, he said, when he felt worthy to see his birthplace once more; and he would not return thither, till his labours should have abundantly covered his fault.

There were few of the prisoners to whom Rabaut had not some details to give of their family or friends. They overpowered him with questions; their eagerness seemed to increase with the very tears that his answers made them shed. To which of them had he not one or more deaths to communicate? But the most sorrowful conversations are the most difficult to bring to an end.

The night drew on, however. Many hours had struck on the clock of the Cordeliers since the minister had entered the Tower; there had even been heard, outside the door, something like the whispering of people growing impatient. Those within had imagined it was the jailers, tired of watching, for the Major had forbidden them to go in, and they were only to open the door when Rabaut should knock.

Marie Durand, alone, had felt her fears revived. This noise had appeared to her ominous; her countenance expressed such anguish, that at last the minister had perceived it. But he was engaged at that moment in such sorrowful recitals, to which we shall have to return presently, that this terror seemed explained; at the utmost, he thought that she trembled when hearing him speak of a pastor about to perish,* at the thought of the dangers that he himself was continually exposed to. But suddenly he became silent; they had just heard without, something like the heavy fall of the butt end of a musket on the stairs. He turned pale—the women remained motionless and terror-struck. There could be no doubt—treachery was watching at that door. To flee, was out of the question—to wait, would have been to wear out in

* Rochette, at Toulouse.

apprehensions, the courage that was left him. He went straight to the door and knocked; it was opened. The staircase was covered with soldiers.

The women gave a piercing shriek; but in the face of danger he had already recovered his self-possession.

"Whom do you want?" said he.

There was no answer. The soldiers did not move; they seemed to avoid his glance.

"Whom do you want?" he repeated.

There was still no answer, but a harsh impatient voice was heard behind the soldiers, murmuring, "Go on! go on, then." They recognised it to be that of the Major.

"Sir," said the minister—and his eye sought him in the darkness—"I need not tell you that this is infamous. You know it; for you are hiding yourself."

And with that imposing gesture which gave so much authority to his words, he added:—"Wait for me!"

He then turned to the prisoners.

"Farewell—farewell, my poor sisters"—

But he could say no more. The noise of their sobs stifled his voice. They had thrown themselves at his feet; they clung to his dress; they bathed his hands with their tears.

One of them—her face hid in her hands, had rushed towards Anne Gaussaint's bed. Suddenly she was seen to rise up, give a scream, and fall back in a fainting fit. She had by chance touched one of the hands of the aged prisoner. The hand was cold and stiff. Anne Gaussaint's prayer had been heard; she had departed in peace. Her body was already cold, and proved that she had expired some time before, perhaps at the very moment that the minister left the side of her bed.

"Well," said he, "God be praised! I have opened her prison-doors for her."

Then, returning immediately to the door—"Major d'Ambly," said he, "one of your prisoners is wanting. Here is the other. Let us go!"

The soldiers took their places mechanically around him. It would have been difficult, from their attitude, to say whether he was their prisoner or their leader.

"Let us go!" he repeated—and the door, closing upon him, concealed him from the sight of the prisoners.

A week had passed away. His friends, the convicts at Toulon, were also expecting a visit from him. They knew not to what to attribute the delay.

Like the captives at Aigues-Mortes, they were beginning to feel the effects of that toleration which, in spite of the laws, was making its way in the manners of the country generally; amongst subordinates in spite of their superiors, amongst the superiors in spite of themselves.

But till lately, they had still had to bear the same privations and sufferings as the criminals on a footing with whom they were placed. A letter written to the pastor Lafond, in 1753, by the convict Isaac Grenier, gives us the most painful details on this subject:—"Our circumstances," says he, "always depend upon those who rule over us. They vary according to the caprices of minds often eccentric, and always more or less brutal. You have heard what clothes are given us, with which we must bear the cold of winter and the heat of summer. Receiving no other food than bread and water, employed in the work allotted to us, we can only be exempted from it by paying a sol every morning to the sergeants; otherwise we are liable to punishment—such as being fastened to a beam of wood by a heavy chain, day and night." Let us not forget to say that the writer of this letter was *eighty-three years of age;* besides, he was a man of good family. Equality,

which was still banished from the social system, existed, as we see, at the bagnio, even in the case of those who had the greatest right to respect. Isaac Grenier had just lost his son, a convict like himself; his fortune had been confiscated, and he had to depend upon the charity of his brethren for the miserable *sol* that he had to give to the sergeants.

Even this equality between the Protestant galley-slave and ordinary criminals, was already a great improvement; for at first they had been exposed to the most dreadful treatment. Under Louis XIV., there was no torture, either physical or moral, that was not invented to inflict upon them. The Romanist convicts were comparatively well off.

All this was at an end. It was in vain that some Parliaments—urged on by the clergy, spurred by the perpetual necessity of expiating, at the expense of others, their own Gallican boldness—had been seized with a terrible spirit of emulation to continue the work of the *great king*. Those whom they sent to the galleys, generally found protectors there —friends, assistance, every alleviation, in short, of which a residence at the bagnio admitted. The severity of their guards softened down before their patience and courage. It became impossible not to make an immense distinction between them and the criminals whose lot they shared; and there was not one of their guards who did not at heart break through the monstrous rules which the magistrates had introduced.

Finally, as at Aigues-Mortes, the well-known impossibility of obtaining conversions, had disgusted the priests; they kept aloof. Gentle measures led to nothing, and violence was forbidden. There, also, the system was faithfully maintained, by which the Protestants were supposed to be condemned, not as Protestants, but for having violated the statutes which forbade them to assemble together—a miserable fiction, which spared the persecutors some acts of cruelty.

but, on the other hand, only served to render the persecution as absurd as it was already odious.

Some days, therefore, after the adventure at Aigues-Mortes, two of our convicts, chained together, were seated in the arsenal. One of them, young and strong, was reading; the other, old and broken down, half lying on a plank, exhibited the exhaustion of fatigue in his whole person, and that of the deepest depression in his countenance.

"How much longer do we rest?" inquired he.

"Half-an-hour, I think."

"I need it. How shall I begin again?"

"Let me work alone. They will take no notice."

"Yes; but I must remain standing just the same,—go, come, and follow all your movements. And in vain you try to make them as gentle as you can, my poor Fabre; you hurt me terribly."

"You never told me so."

"Ought I to have added another care to all you already bear for my sake?"

"You were my father's friend, and I am almost your son."

"*Almost?* You are indeed altogether! What is sure—but too sure"—and he sighed deeply—"is, that I have now no other."

We have recognised old Bruyn in this speaker.

"Say what you will!" resumed he. "Thus to chain life to death—is dreadful"—and he shook with his trembling hand the heavy chain that connected him with his companion.

"Be calm," said Fabre. "Am I not very happy, after all, to be with a friend? What if I were chained to one of those vile scoundrels? Be calm."

He relapsed into his depression. His companion began to read again.

"You would like better to walk about, I am sure," resumed the old man, after a moment's pause.

"No, indeed. Besides, do you not see I am reading?"

"What are you reading?"

"You know, my old friend. My library has but one volume."

"Oh! that comedy that M. Court sent you; your own story, I believe."

"Yes. The *Honnête Criminel*, in five acts, by a certain Fenouillet de Falbaire."

"And it—pleases you?"

"Alas! never was convict's jacket so coarse, but that pride could lodge beneath it. Yes; they have given me a fine character there—they make me declaim verses—and verses—and yet"—

"Yet?"

"I am perhaps ungrateful, but after all, the piece does not seem to me to be worth much."

"Indeed!"

"Grand words, grand verses, grand sentiments, but little or no nature—still less religion; on the other hand, abundance of improbabilities, and, what is most curious, the author does not appear to suspect that his hero is still alive. He has heard my adventure related; he has laid hold of it incorrectly, and never thought of inquiring the date. That error speaks more, indeed, than all his declamations. Evidently, it has never occurred to him that the fact might be a recent one. Such laws appeared to him to belong to another century. I should not be surprised if he were ignorant that there are still Protestants at the galleys."

"They say that there will soon be more."

"The chain from Toulouse is to arrive one of these days—perhaps to-day. There will surely be some."

"As M. Rabaut has put off his visit so long, let him wait a little longer, and our poor new-comers will at least benefit by it."

"Yes; but this delay begins to make me uneasy. He wrote to me, as you know, from Aigues-Mortes; he was to see our prisoners there that very day"—

"My poor wife!" murmured Bruyn.

"— and to set off next day for Toulon. He tells me that he had obtained permission to see us in private, ten at a time. He will cheer you up."

"Yes; the soul—and that is the principal object—but the body?"

"Both body and soul—you will see."

"God grant it! But, by the bye, you have not told me if he says anything to you of the solicitations begun in your favour."

"Some words."

"And these few words?"

"I wished to say nothing about it to you."

"Why? Oh! I understand you—my God! my God!"

"Well, then, he writes me word, that the solicitations proceed; that the Duke de Choiseul has taken up the affair, and means to lay it before the king."

"Before the king!"

"He adds, that this piece, however bad it may be, has been the fashion; that it is read and acted in private circles; that it will perhaps be performed on the stage; in short, that my release is certain."

"And you will leave me!" cried out Bruyn. "And I shall remain behind; and you will—but no, go—go; be happy—be free; what is there in common between you and me? You sacrificed yourself for your father, and I have been dishonoured by my son."

"Still that remembrance!—still!"

"Go—go; the name of Bruyn is only worthy to become extinct at the galleys; forgive me—forgive me; you have done me good, and shall I envy you your happiness? Yet what a prospect!—Alone!—given up to I know not whom—my God! my God!"

The bell rang; in an instant all was in motion in the arsenal. But hardly had work been resumed, when the cry of "The chain! the chain!" spread as quick as lightning from the very entrance to the furthest extremity of the bagnio. The bell rang again; the convicts, leaving their work, fell immediately into their ranks; they waited with noisy exultation to be led to meet their new companions in misery. The Protestants took no part in this brutal mirth; but they were equally impatient to see which of their brethren were about to share their lot.

The melancholy column had halted at the entrance of the yard. As soon as all the convicts were drawn up on the two sides of the avenue, it was put into motion again.

Convicts did not then travel in carriages as now. It was a wretched sight to see those faces with long beards, those worn down bodies, those bleeding feet. Some, with all the audacity of crime, seemed to revive in the air of the bagnio; others, with the depression of cowardice or remorse, sought to avoid observation. Some, finally, neither sought to exhibit nor to hide themselves; if they bowed their heads, it was with the calm of resignation; if they raised them, it was to seek for friendly faces. These were the Protestants.

Out of sixty arrivals, there were ten of the latter; it was a considerable proportion, and recalled the good times of Louis XIV.

"The Desert has sent a supply," said an old guard to Fabre and Bruyn. "Are there any of your friends there?"

"None that I know, as yet. But probably they are not all passed."

"No—here are some, I believe."

The column, in fact, terminated by a group of Protestants. Fabre, thunderstruck, had just perceived his three friends there—Sabatié, and the two brothers Reboul—Madeleine's two brothers, those who with him escorted Rabaut on the day of Bruyn's treachery. They, too, had just recognised him, and nodded their heads, smiling, as friends do when they meet.

They passed on; Fabre followed them with his eyes. Old Bruyn was quite overpowered; it would have been less painful to him to have recognised his own son beneath that odious costume, than to see all the witnesses of his disgrace arrive.

"To work!" cried the overseer.

Fabre, instead of obeying, turned to follow the column. He was let alone; the overseers were authorized to have every indulgence for him which was not absolutely contrary to the general regulations. But Bruyn could not move quickly. The new arrivals were already drawn up in a court, and the superintendent of the bagnio was about to inspect them. It was necessary to survey the goods sent in, and give a receipt to those who brought them.

This superintendent, the Marquis d'Origny, had been the first friend of the Protestants at the galleys. It was from him that Rabaut had received permission to see them. He only wished, like Major d'Ambly, that the thing should appear to be done without his knowledge; therefore, although he frequently spoke to Fabre, and knew that he was informed of the pastor's visit, he had not mentioned it to him. It was, therefore, with much surprise that our two convicts saw him come up to them with a threatening and agitated appearance. But they soon felt that they were not the objects of his anger.

"Good day, Fabre," said he. "Good day, Bruyn." Then in a lower tone, and so as to be heard by them only, "He will come—let him fear nothing." And he left them amazed, both at his confidential tone, and at the mixture of irritation and kindness.

The inspection being over, they could go up to their friends. Fabre threw himself into their arms; Bruyn, whose eyes were swollen with the tears that he could not shed, pressed their hands convulsively.

"You here!—you here!"

"Why not?" said Sabatié. "You are both here."

"Where did they take you?"

"Nowhere. They are no longer satisfied with surprising us at our assemblies, nor even with punishing those whom they suppose to have attended them. The circle of crime is extended at the pleasure of our persecutors. We were asked if it was true that we had sometimes escorted M. Rabaut. We might have denied it; we would not; and here we are."

"And does M. Rabaut know of your misfortune?"

"He must know it."

"How is it that he did not write to me of it?"

"Write?—has he written to you lately?"

"Yes; from Aigues-Mortes."

"From Aigues-Mortes!" exclaimed the three friends.

"Yes, from Aigues-Mortes," said Fabre, surprised in his turn at their astonishment, and at the tone in which they spoke. "Did you not know that I received letters from him?"

"Yes; but"—

"He announced to me, in his last, his intention to visit us here very soon."

"But do you think, then, that they will be satisfied with sending *him* to the galleys?"

"Sending him? I do not understand you."

But he had scarcely spoken the words, when the terrible truth flashed upon him. He grew pale; he trembled to ask further questions.

"But," he at last resumed, "are you sure of what you say? It is but a moment ago that the superintendent—You saw him speaking to us, did you not? Well, he was precisely telling us that M. Rabaut was coming, and that he had nothing to fear."

The friends shrugged their shoulders.

"The superintendent—the superintendent!"

"Yes, the superintendent; he is our best friend here; he is open, kind"—

"Is he, perhaps, better than the Major of the Tower of Constance?"

"They say that M. d'Ambly is an excellent man."

"Excellent, indeed, for acts of treachery."

"Was it he?"

"It is he. Trust to your M. d'Origny after that! M. Rabaut"—

"But if he is already taken," said Bruyn, "there is no more question about taking him."

"That is true. You may suppose, then, that the superintendent has been laughing at you."

"He?" said Fabre. "It is impossible."

"Think what you please; but what is sure, only too sure, is, that our pastor is taken."

"He is lost!"

"Hush!—listen!"—and Sabatié, coming quite close to them, hurried them into a corner of the court.

"Listen to me. We have just passed through the province. We have seen some of our friends, here and there. They were able to say a few words to us, in spite of our

guards. A terrible fermentation prevails in the Cevennes. In a week, in three or four days perhaps, Languedoc will be on fire. We shall see."

An overseer came up, and they were obliged to separate.

Sabatié told the truth. At the news of the pastor's arrest, the old Camisard blood had kindled once more, with all its ardour, in those hearts so long oppressed. The courage of all, and the remembrances of all, had, we have said, fixed as their rallying-point the day when despotism should lay hold of him who preached patience to them. That day was come. The Cévenols were about to raise their heads. God Himself, they said, by allowing the period they had fixed to arrive, seemed to order the combat, and assure the victory.

The most moderate, even some pastors, who, like Rabaut, had not ceased to preach resignation and peace, were beginning to doubt whether rebellion was a crime. They knew what God commands to subjects; but did not a whole century of submission absolve them beforehand? And since that submission brought no alleviation—since there was no hope left that tyranny would spare the least vestige of their faith, was it not time to repeat now,—their heads raised, and sword in hand, "It is better to obey God than man"?

Nevertheless, there was not a province in France where the old proverbial attachment of the French people to their sovereigns had been kept up more inviolate. Yes, the Protestants still loved that king who crushed them, or allowed them to be crushed. He was still to them God's anointed, and the grandson of Henry IV. Nowhere had the news of his illness at Metz, in 1744, been received with deeper or more sincere sorrow. A synod,* then assembled, has left us a record, in its reports, of this singular loyalty. "On the 20th

* It was the first general or *national* synod since the revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

of August, at the close of the sitting, one of the members having communicated a letter that he had just received, which contained the sad and afflicting news of the king's illness, they fell on their knees, to entreat God by fervent prayer, for his Majesty's restoration to health. Then, the Synod resolved that, as soon as possible, public prayers should be offered up in all the churches on the same subject." Two days before, at the opening of the Synod, "after having read the Word of God, and implored the assistance of the Holy Spirit, all the members of the assembly made the most sincere protestations of their inviolable fidelity to the king." Resolved, consequently, that each pastor shall preach once a year on the necessity of submission to the powers that be; resolved, still further, that in all the churches, a solemn fast shall be shortly celebrated, the object of which shall be principally "for the preservation of his Majesty's most sacred person." Never had Christian submission, never had the monarchical doctrine been more publicly professed.

Indeed, it is not only the worship paid to royalty by them that we find it difficult to conceive in the present day. Habit had rendered it almost universally independent of the virtues or vices, of the benevolence or the severity, of the individual occupying the throne. Under the royal sword, people cried, "Long live the king! God save the king!" just as, thirty years later, under the axe of the Republic, many cried, "God save the Republic!"

People might, therefore, at that period, rebel against the royal authority, even fight against the king's soldiers, without, for all that, rebelling against the king—without having, at least, the smallest intention of doing so. In our day, it would be but a play upon words; we should accuse whoever had recourse to it, of bad faith; and we should be right. But then, the distinction was possible. However little logical we

may think it, it nevertheless rested on a real and firm feeling. When the Parliaments resisted the will of the king, they thought themselves as much royalists as ever; when the Protestants were on the point of having recourse to arms, in order to escape from oppression, it was with their whole souls and consciences that they declared themselves willing to remain the very humble subjects of the king.

Something analogous to what has always been seen in religion was then taking place in politics. Few men, while throwing off the yoke of God's laws, are conscious of rebelling against God Himself; the greater number, almost all, would repel the idea of it with horror. It was thus, at that period, with regard to kings. A king was a species of god. We say, he was; he is so no longer. This is the key to all that appears to us inexplicable in the feelings and conduct of their subjects in former times.

As to outward circumstances, for a long period they had not been so favourable as at that moment for the intended rising.

Financial embarrassments had increased; military matters were going on from bad to worse. It was the fifth year of a war which was to last seven, but of the termination of which there was as yet no sign, and which only offered the indefinite prospect of agitation and disasters. Exhausted within, humiliated without, France was less than ever in a condition to struggle vigorously against a part of herself. The English had taken Belle-Isle, and threatened from thence all the Gulf of Gascony. The Marshals de Broglie and Soubise, at the head of a hundred thousand men, had only obtained insignificant successes in Germany, soon followed by a defeat.* The famous *Pacte de famille*, concluded by the Duke de

* At Fillinghausen, July 16, 1761.

Choiseul,* between all the reigning princes of the house of Bourbon,† had till then only brought about new complications. The navy had ceased to exist; the colonies were falling one by one into the hands of the English. Twice, in the course of this year, France had humbly offered, not to say asked for, peace with England; twice had England replied by the mouth of Pitt, in the language of an enemy sure of success, who can have peace when he chooses, and who takes advantage, meanwhile, of all the chances of war.

With our Cévenols, it was a very serious question whether they ought to accept, should the case occur, the assistance of that power. The great majority felt repugnant to do so. After having so often repelled, as an odious calumny, the imputation of being united at heart to the enemies of the French name, how could they open the kingdom to those very soldiers against whom Brittany and Guyenne so bravely kept up their fire? Ought that alliance against France, with which the old Camisards had been so reproached, to be renewed by their children?

Others, however, were less scrupulous. According to them, these were only considerations of human honour, serious in human affairs, of small account when the rights of conscience and the interests of religion were concerned. In the above mentioned Synod of 1744, the public fast which had been ordered for the preservation of the king's life had also another object—"the success of his arms." Success had been granted; what had they gained by it? All the effective soldiers left by a triumphant peace, had been turned, by the king's orders, upon Languedoc, and persecution had recommenced with more ardour and obstinacy than had been seen for thirty years past. To call in the English in order to give up the

* August 15, 1761.

† The Kings of France, Spain, and Naples; the Duke of Parma and Placentia.

country to them, said these same Protestants, would be a crime; to accept the support which they might give to a rising of an entirely religious character, could be only taking advantage of assistance offered by God Himself. How could they recognise all that country's rights over them which had treated them as pariahs for a hundred years past? Can a cruel stepmother be considered as a mother? Can it be forbidden to seek from strangers some support against her fury?

Lastly, some who might have been called the philosophical party, although, in all other respects, little resembling the innovators of the day—some, we say, either bolder or more consistent, asked themselves if they were not quite emancipated from all duty towards a country which had determined on their ruin, and towards a sovereign who declared himself to be decided on treating them as enemies so long as they did not abjure? "Have not all the ties that bound us to France been broken?" said they. "Have we contracted the lasting obligation to consider our oppressors as fellow-countrymen and brethren, because we are born under the same sky with them? Our brethren—our true brethren—are those who have one faith with us. As for the rights of the French crown, which we have hitherto acknowledged, nothing obliges us to acknowledge them indefinitely. Above the right of sovereigns, are the rights of the people. Languedoc was ours before it belonged to the king. If we gave it over to the English, that alone would constitute England its mistress, just as France now is."

But this mode of reasoning, although in conformity to the ideas of the day, and more than that, to incontestable principles, was far too much in advance of the mass of the Protestants. It could not be effaced from their minds that there was treason in calling into the heart of the kingdom a people with whom France was at war without. They had long

ceased to be the brethren of their fellow-countrymen; but they could not give up the hope of being such one day. In despite of their persecutors, they felt that there was but a fictitious separation between them and the rest of the nation. They did not wish the wall, raised up by fanaticism, which at the first breath of justice and reason might fall, to be exchanged for an impassable gulf.

Such was, then—such had always been, in reality, the general state of feeling. These details, perhaps somewhat tedious, have appeared necessary to us. The history of the French Protestants in the eighteenth century is so little and so imperfectly known, even by their descendants, that we ought to neglect no opportunity of pointing out its principal features.

They had, however, as yet, neither plan nor leaders. They had no longer him to consult who, for twenty years, had been the soul and centre of the churches; they even asked themselves, not without some anxiety, whether he would approve of the rising? Every one felt the necessity of waiting at least till his trial should have begun. Not knowing where to begin, they wished that circumstances themselves should give the signal and the impulse. They contented themselves, therefore, with collecting every possible detail regarding the enterprises, resources, faults, successes, and reverses of the Camisards. The *History of the Troubles in the Cevennes*, by Antoine Court, published the year before by his son, was in every one's hands; but it was no longer sufficient. The old men were questioned; they were made to repeat all that they knew or had seen of the battles of that period. Whoever had taken a part in them, became once more the hero of the day.

But of all the heroes of the Cévenol drama still living, none had retained more vigour in his narratives, or more freshness of mind, than the aged Antoine Reboul. From the first move-

ments in 1702, down to the last in 1709, he could relate and describe everything. Court had only had to put together, in several parts of his work, the documents of which this ever youthful memory was an inexhaustible storehouse. But that which the historian could not express, was the originality, the untutored eloquence, the striking gestures of the aged Camisard. No one could better transport others with him to the midst of the agitations of his youth, no one knew better how to combine military enthusiasm, and the raptures of ardent faith, with the gravity of age and experience.

Besides, none, not even excepting Rabaut, had given more constant proofs of courage and devotedness. His life—and he was verging on his eighty-third year—had been one long struggle. On returning home after the dispersion of the last troops, he did but exchange weapons. Always first and last at the assemblies and synods, every danger had found him at his post; and yet, like those veterans of whom it might almost be said that cannon-balls are afraid, he had never been surprised, compromised, nor personally disquieted.

But he had seen those blows which he himself had been spared, fall on those around him. His wife, after receiving rough treatment from the soldiery, had died in giving birth to a son. That son, grown up to manhood, had died at the galleys in 1750, leaving three children, a daughter and two sons. We have just seen the two sons at the bagnio, at Toulon. The daughter was Madeleine, betrothed to Bruyn. No one, since she had been carried off, had heard any tidings of her.

And yet it was to this man, so cruelly tried, that others went to seek strength and courage. Every evening some of the Protestants of the neighbourhood might be seen arriving at his old house at Pont-de-Montvert. They read the Bible; they conversed; they prayed. Those who came with burdened hearts, went away a little less sorrowful. Sometimes,

in the midst of these evening meetings, a particular knock at the door would be heard. They started and hastened to the door, but without a light, for the person arriving was one who ought not to be seen from without. It was a pastor, going his rounds, who came to seek hospitality for the night. Alas! in that same house, notwithstanding, two had been arrested —Dombres in 1689, and Arnaud in 1718; it was even by special favour that it had not been demolished, as the edicts required in similar cases. But, in the choice of perils, the pastors still preferred the pious fireside of the aged Reboul.

For some days past, however, the meetings had assumed a different character. Pont-de-Montvert had called to mind that it had formerly given the signal, and desired to be ready to give it again. Young and old secretly repaired to Reboul's house. A committee had been formed. A great meeting had been decided on.

CHAPTER IX.

It was night. Let us enter. No one had as yet arrived. Reboul was alone in his large kitchen, where the first council of the insurrection was to be held in an hour. He had left his staff in a corner. He went to and fro, as if he were but five-and-twenty. Was he not carried back to-night to 1702?

He had just laid down a Bible, on a table, on the right of the chimney. It is it, or rather God by it, that is to preside over the meeting. He sat down before the holy book, and collected his thoughts for an instant. He opened it, searched out and marked two places. Which?—we shall see presently. He then resumed his walk; but his step was slower, his body less erect. It seemed as though suddenly he felt the weight of years.

Under the outward appearance of boldness and courage, more than one conflict, during the past days, had taken place in his mind. Ought he, with one foot in the grave, to take upon himself such a responsibility? He would soon escape from the miseries of which this war might be the source, by death; but in what condition would he leave all those young men whom he had drawn on to their ruin, and the country on which he had contributed to bring down the most terrible vengeance?

These moments of anguish were succeeded by moments of ardour. He had himself sufficiently braved all those dangers

to which he was about to lead on his brethren, not to be liable to the accusation of selfishness or fear. Who would dare ask him by what right he urged them on to war? He had purchased that right, nearly sixty years back, at the point of the sword, and at the price of a hundred battles. Whatever might be the result of the struggle, he would be forgiven, for having wished to hail, before he died, the dawn of that liberty for which he had fought in vain in his early years.

"Well!" said he; "well!" And he resumed his walk, with his head raised, his body firm and erect. "Yes! the measure is full—war! God wills it. We have waited but too long. Yes, too long; but no—let there be no regret. We have indeed waited long—very long. So much the better: our cause will but appear the more sacred in the sight of man, as it is already in the sight of God! Come, my trusty sword—come forth!"

He went and opened a wardrobe. There, in a secret drawer with which he only was acquainted, had slept for nearly half a century, his whole Camisard equipment—a long musket, a cuirass, taken from one of those dragoons so lamentably celebrated in the misfortunes of the Protestants; a broad-brimmed hat, two pistols, and finally the sword, the elegance of which contrasted with the coarseness of the rest. It had descended to him from one of his ancestors, a comrade of Henry IV. It had figured at Ivry, at Arques; it had thrown its weight into the balance in favour of those Bourbons, so ready to forget to whom they owe the throne.

"Here it is!" said he. "Come"—and he went and laid it upon the Bible.

"There," resumed he; "there. If you can do nothing now in my hands, speak at least in my stead, to those who are strong enough to fight, young enough to hope."

Some friends came in at the moment.

"At last!" said Reboul.

"Are we late?"

The village clock was striking seven.

"No. I thought—this day has been so long."

They arrived one or two at a time, some by the street, others by the garden. They had just placed a sentinel at each entrance. The night, which was foggy and dark, favoured the conspirators, but might also assist traitors. They therefore endeavoured to come in separately, and as if by chance. Besides, the meeting was only to open at eight o'clock.

"Have you nothing to tell us while we are waiting?" said some of the young men to the master of the house.

"To tell you, children! Have I not told you everything long ago?"

"Perhaps; but we did not then think we should ever do as you did—all will seem new to-night."

"What day of the month is it?"

"The sixteenth."

"The sixteenth of December—very good—one of my oldest anniversaries."

He had just sat down at the corner of the fire, in his chesnut arm-chair. The young men formed a circle, standing round him.

"Yes—that is it," said he, as if speaking to himself. "The sixteenth of December, seventeen hundred and two. Children," resumed he in a louder tone, "you have all seen, have you not, the ruins of the Château de Servas, between Alais and Uzès? Well, there are fifty-nine years to-day since it fell."

"Thanks to you."

"Thanks to God first, then to me, then to thirty others, the last of whom died at least twenty years ago."

"And you took that castle?"

"Not by assault; I had entered it my hands and feet bound."

"What! as a prisoner? You told us you had never been taken."

"Stop. That castle did us dreadful injury. There was a garrison there, which was not numerous, but composed of all that was most thoroughly banditti in the troops of the province. To keep us in check, to kill some of our men when they could, was but natural—it was their duty and their business. But to plunder, as they did, our villages, to rob on the high-road at midday whoever they might be pleased to consider as Protestants, to heap together women and children in the dungeons of the castle, was highway robbery and plunder, and it was urgent to put an end to it.

"What was to be done? to attack the castle? We should have been crushed against its walls. Cavalier, our leader, could not sleep for thinking of it. 'Listen,' said he to me one day. 'You will allow your hands to be tied behind your back. You must be a prisoner—one of those good-for-nothing Camisards, that I, with a detachment of thirty men, king's soldiers, have in charge to give up to the governor of the castle. I shall arrive at the gate. It will be opened. I shall go in with some of my men, with the thirty if I can, and—you understand me?' 'I understand you,' said I, 'but take care to have me unbound when I shall want to make use of my arms.'

"It was done. Only, to give more probability to the tale, and also to have more men introduced into the castle, four or five companions were joined to me.

"We arrived, they and myself, dressed as Camisards, our guards as soldiers, and Cavalier as an officer—for we had a provision of clothes; the soldiers who fell beneath our balls furnished us with a supply.

"The governor received us admirably—I mean our guards, for as to us prisoners, we were let down into a sort of ditch, without light or air, where we could not have lived three days. But we had not been there three minutes, when we heard a noise, footsteps and cries. We were taken up out of our well, arms were given us, and the castle was ours. An hour later, a high column of flames and smoke announced the victory of the Camisards to the whole country."

"And did they not make you pay for that victory?" inquired one of his hearers.

"They tried. A week after, the Sunday before Christmas, as we were engaged in worship at Mas-Cauvi, on the estate of St. Christal, the Chevalier de Guines came upon us with the garrison of Alais, three or four hundred armed citizens, and fifty gentlemen on horseback. We were altogether eighty men, but eighty men equal to four hundred;—first from our courage—be it said without vanity; besides, and chiefly, from the terror which our name was beginning to excite. The gentlemen began the assault. Our fire killed five or six, and wounded a dozen. We rushed forward, without waiting for a second attack. We threw them back upon the soldiers; the soldiers, thrown back, retreated upon the citizens—in a twinkling, gentlemen, citizens, soldiers, were all fleeing as fast as they could. We pursued them as long as we could, nearly to the gates of Alais, and returned quietly to finish the service. We had not lost a man, we had not even received a scratch. Mark this, children; see what you can do when God and the right is on your side."

Reboul was beginning to be excited. His eyes sparkled; it seemed as though he smelt powder.

The circle had enlarged, but no one now asked questions. Why ask them? They had but to let the sanguinary torrent of his remembrances take its course. "Yes," resumed he, "mark

this, my friends; and mark it well, you, too, our masters! When we could not use strength, we had recourse to cunning; when the lion, too closely pursued, was forced to hide himself, he became a serpent. A fortnight had hardly elapsed since the taking of the castle, when we entered Suave in the same way, a very large village, almost a town, with walls, gates, and a regular garrison. It is true, that we were that day nearly three hundred, Cavalier and Roland having united their forces. Fifty of us dressed ourselves as king's soldiers. We arrived—drums beating, and officers at our head—at the gate of the place; we gave ourselves out for a detachment in pursuit of the rebels. The gates were opened, and we were received as deliverers. The soldiers, drawn up in order of battle on the square, had refreshments brought them; the officers were invited to dine with M. de Vibrac, the lord of the place. But scarcely had they sat down to table, when the approach of the Camisards was announced with a great noise. We hastened to the gate to defend it, as we said, and we opened it. Our friends entered; the garrison and citizens did not even try to resist. They expected, poor people, to be put to the sword; but that day we only seized upon arms and ammunition. We made ample provision of both, and departed. Oh! I forgot, we burned the church, and we shot the priest."

Reboul paused for a moment, as if to judge of the effect produced by these last words.

They looked at him with surprise. "The priest!" murmured they, "the priest!"

"Well, yes," said he, "the priest. Does that astonish you? So much the better; you will be better than we were. Yes, we were cruel. Yes, we were too often like the assassins sent out into our villages. Pity us, children, pity us; and may it please God to forget our crimes! But before con-

demning us, think for a moment what we were, what our enemies were, to what shame and distress we had submitted in silence before being brought to that. You are under laws of iron, it is true; but at least they are laws. As for us, we had as many masters, or rather as many executioners, as there were priests and soldiers in the country. The edicts are not mitigated; but they have ended by becoming a complete system of legislation. By dint of oppressing, they protect you. Everything is regulated; you know what to seek or avoid, what to fear or desire. Then, there was as it were only one edict, one word of command—to annihilate us as soon as possible, and at any price. Besides, you are born under the yoke; but we had seen all that our ancestors had conquered taken from us, all those rights that we considered secured by a solemn edict, and almost a century of possession. You do not intend to burn churches? So much the better; but you have not seen, as we did, five hundred of our temples fall beneath the hammer of the destroyer. You do not mean to shoot priests? So much the better; but you do not know what the priests of that day were. What is that fox of an Abbé Charnay compared to that tiger of an Abbé Chayla, who had his den precisely here, at the end of the bridge, two steps from my house? The Abbé Chayla! his very name made people shudder. For fifteen years he was the public executioner of the country; for fifteen years he passed his days and nights in inventing new persecutions, and new tortures. He had arrived amongst us in 1687, with the title of Inspector of Missions in the Cevennes. *Inspector*, indeed!—for there was not a house which he left unsearched, not a violation of the edicts but he knew it, and washed it out in blood. To torture was his happiness—his life. We knew that the house which he had made his fortress, and which formerly belonged to one of our brethren, André, who had

been assassinated by the Chevalier de Genne, was perpetually full of Protestants, from the cellars to the attics, dying by inches in his hands. He kept them for months in the stocks, with both their feet and legs confined at once, so that they could neither rise up nor sit down. He plucked out the hair of their heads, their beards, and their eyebrows with pincers. He put live coals into their hands, and held them closed till the coals were extinguished. At other times, he wrapped their fingers in cotton dipped in oil; he set fire to it, and the fingers were burnt to the very bone.*

"Those, however, were but his pastimes with such as were not guilty enough to be brought to trial. Wherever he himself saw sufficient charges against his victims, or could hope they would be seen, he called in the judges, that is to say, the executioner; for there was no instance of those whose death he demanded having failed to be condemned. The edicts only punished actions; but he had assumed the jurisdiction of an inquisitor. Words, looks, feelings, all were matter for trial. A poor girl of this place, Frances Brez, was hanged for having said that we ought not to adore the wafer. From this very window I saw her led to death.

"Well, beneath such atrocious oppression, none thought as yet of resisting and taking up arms. We were suffering—we were perishing; but we desired to be, to the last, as sheep led to the slaughter.

"God did not allow it. The Abbé Chayla was doomed to die. His death was to give the signal of the insurrection.

* These details, which may be thought invented, or at least greatly exaggerated, are related in all the narratives of the times with the marks of the most complete authenticity. Besides, they are but too much in conformity with what we know of the manner in which the Protestants were treated. Strange contradictions of the human heart! The Abbé Chayla had been a missionary amongst the savages. Several times he had been on the point of undergoing their awful tortures. He had braved them with the courage of an apostle; and the same man tried them, in his turn, upon Christians, his own countrymen.

"And yet, God knows!—the very day that we rushed upon that accursed house, not one of us as yet dreamed of imbruing his hands in the blood of the Abbé Chayla. We only intended to deliver his victims, one especially, that several of you have known, and who was to be put to death on the following day. What had he done? He had served as guide to the Protestants of Moissac, who wished to take refuge at Geneva. His relations, his friends, had thrown themselves at the feet of the priest; but he had laughed at their supplications, and mocked at their tears. One day, when we were assembled together at Mount Bougés, the wife, brother, and children of Massip arrived. Their cries and groans interrupted the service. 'To-morrow,' said they, 'to-morrow he dies! And will you let him die?' We looked at each other in silence. We had just prayed for him; as for delivering him, none had thought of it. The boldest turned pale, not from fear—we have given proofs of the contrary—but the thought of rebellion was so far removed from our minds. 'Must he then die!' cried the poor wife. 'Must he die!' repeated his poor children. 'He shall not die!' I exclaimed; and that very instant the resolution was taken, and the plan formed.

"We were fifty men assembled there. We appointed to meet in the evening at the same spot.

"All came. Our arms consisted of some swords, some old halberds, ten or twelve muskets; many had only staves. Such was the beginning of that army, the leader of which was at last to treat with one of Louis XIV.'s marshals on equal terms.

"Children, I am eighty-three; but were I to live as many years over again, I should never forget that evening! it was in the month of July. The night came on late, but it was dark, damp, and suffocating. One of those uncertain storms

that enervate both soul and body, had long been suspended in the atmosphere; it seemed only to wait to burst forth till we should be ready to act. Night, the approach of danger, and still more the novelty of the enterprise, all contributed to our emotion. As for me, my thoughts went further. I had read the beginning of the Swiss history; I knew how a people is formed. Were we about to become one! a people! Was this lonely meadow to be our Grütli! Alas! it has remained unknown. Of all those whose footprints were upon it that night, I alone am now alive. And never have I seen it since but it has seemed to me red with blood!

"We prayed; we set out. It was midnight. The storm was coming on; the lightning showed us our path. At a hundred paces from the village, we were still praying. And suddenly our enemy heard a gloomy chant, mingling with the rolling of the distant thunder. It was our party entering the village slowly and in good order, as we raised the psalm, which has since become our war-song:—

'Let God, the God of battles rise,
And scatter His presumptuous foes;
Let shameful rout their host surprise,
Who spitefully His power oppose.'

"We surrounded the house; we demanded the prisoners. Nothing stirred; nothing appeared. We drew nearer. "Fire!" said a voice within, that of the abbé himself. Several shots were fired from the windows, killed one of our men, and wounded two or three. Then we threw ourselves against the door; we broke it in; we rushed to the dungeons. Good God! what a spectacle was there! Some were in irons, their hands, by a refinement of barbarity, fastened behind their backs. Beside these unfortunate beings, who were always lying on the ground, were others, always standing, their arms drawn upwards to the ceiling, bowed down beneath the pressure of dreadful fatigue. We unbound them; they fell

down. We wept; we stormed. Suddenly, as if inspired by a demon, 'The abbé!' we all exclaimed at once. 'The abbé! where is the abbé?' The abbé tried to escape. He was taken; he was brought before his victims. We rushed upon him.—Did I strike him? I know not. I have been told that he begged for his life. 'If I have lost my soul by persecuting you,' he said, 'will you on that account lose yours by killing me?' But I heard nothing; I listened to nothing; I saw nothing. It seemed to me as though all those brethren to whose tortures we had just put a stop, all those who had fallen victims to them, all who were groaning at the galleys, who had perished on the gallows or the wheel, all, all, in a word, whether dead or alive, were gathered round that man, pointing him out, marking him on the forehead with a sign of blood; I seemed to hear them all crying out, 'No pity for him who has never shown pity!'

"And yet, amidst the agitations of war, the remembrance of that murder has often brought remorse with it. Often amidst our reverses, we said to each other sorrowfully, 'Why did we kill the Abbé Chayla? It was a bad beginning. God is punishing us for it.' Often, even amidst our successes, when we happened to view more calmly that long extermination of which we were the instruments—'Why did we kill the Abbé Chayla?' we said again. 'It is to punish us for his death, that God makes us kill so many others. We have dipped our feet in blood; and are now condemned to swim in it!' Oh! no, children, no; let there be no wilful bloodshed! None other than that which shall be honourably shed, if it must be so, in battle! Fifty years of suffering have washed out the stain on our banner. It is pure—keep it pure! And may all the friends of the Gospel, to whatever nation they belong, accompany it with their prayers and their sympathy!"

All were now arrived; the narrative of the aged Reboul had been listened to, in religious silence. At length, without leaving the fireside, he turned his arm-chair towards the assembly. All sat down. The table, on which we have seen him place the Bible, was put before him. He remained a moment in silent prayer, then opened it.

It was at the first pages of the book of Nehemiah. That simple story of the misfortunes of the people of God was so applicable, so full of interest, to the oppressed Protestants! Those sighs, those hopes, consolations, and promises, suited them so well! How they followed the captive Jews to the inhospitable shores of the Euphrates! How they longed with the earnest desires of their whole hearts, for the return of those same Jews to the land of their ancestors! The captivity, return, rebuilding of the temple, all, in a word, all, was to them both type and prophecy. They viewed themselves in those descriptions; they read there, in indelible characters, the assurance of a happier future. When should these promises be accomplished? when should the dawn of liberty and peace arise upon their mountains? when should their temples be raised up again? Alas! after so many disappointed hopes, they gave up inquiring into the future. Voices that they might have believed inspired, had predicted, at the beginning of the century, the speedy close of their sufferings. The century was passing away, and their sufferings were not ended. Their prophets had been either madmen or liars; they now looked up to God—to God only. "He who has given the promises," said they, "will surely find means to accomplish them." Thus they were comforted while reading them, and they ever seemed more beautiful, consolatory, and divine.

"'And it came to pass, in the month Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace,

"'That Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.

"'And they said unto me: The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.

"'And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven,

"'And said: I beseech thee, O Lord God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments:

"'Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned.

"'We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses.

"'Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations:

"'But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there.'"

The *return*, always the *return*, was the favourite idea and the constant absorbing thought of these men exiled and in

servitude, even in the bosom of their own country; but the most touching feature in their prayers, was the deep humility with which they accepted the most cruel effects of man's wickedness, as chastisements from God. Their liturgies, prayers, hymns, the exhortations of their pastors, are all filled and deeply impregnated with this idea. There were never any proud comparisons between the austerity of their own morals and the corruption of the times; never a suspicion that before God, before the Holy One, they were more worthy than others, or that their sins needed less to be washed in the blood of the cross. It was with their whole hearts that they said with Nehemiah—

"We have sinned against thee: we have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst."

To these cries uttered by one man of God, another man of God was to reply.

We have seen Reboul mark two places in his Bible. He opened it at the second, and read:—

"'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

"'Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

"'Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God?

"'He giveth power to the faint: and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.

"'But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

"'O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the

high mountain: O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!

"'He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

"'All nations before him are as nothing: and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity.

"'That bringeth the princes to nothing: he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity.

"'Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown: yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth: and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away.'"

One would have said, at these words, that the breath which was to blow upon the kings of the earth, and take them away, was already passing through the assembly. Eyes kindled; hands were convulsively clasped. A secret enthusiasm was gathering in all hearts. But the fire was sufficiently kindled, perhaps too much. Reboul stopped.

"My brethren," said he, after a moment's silence, "we are not to be that whirlwind. Let us not take upon ourselves a mission that God would not confirm. Let us take up arms that we may have the right to live. Let us seek to be allowed to build up in peace, not to overthrow. As soon as we have obtained justice, we shall bow once more as humble subjects, beneath the sceptre which God has appointed to rule over us.

"But till then, let us go forward, brethren! the time of patience is gone by. No! it cannot be the will of God that we should longer witness the ruin of our churches, without resistance. It cannot be His will that we should continue to allow those leaders, those fathers in the faith that He him-

self has given us, to be sacrificed. Let us save them or perish with them!

"Brethren, it is a dreadful thing to shed blood! I know it. I who have shed so much in times gone by—and yet it it is I—I—the last of the Camisards—after fifty years of patience—it is I who say to you, 'Go forward.'

"What shall we do? Where shall we begin? We do not as yet know. We shall this evening try, by God's help, to trace out a route, to calculate and organize our resources. But that which each one of us has had it in his power to do, and ought to have done already in the secret of his own conscience, is to inquire why he has come here, and with what object he is going to take up arms. Let those who feel themselves stimulated by thoughts of vengeance, go back! Let those who seek for vain-glory, go back! Let those who do not think only of God and their salvation, go back! Let not those fight! They are not worthy. They could but draw down on our cause the contempt of man and the anger of God.

"Kneel, then, brethren, kneel, all of you. And let each one, before God, and imploring Him to enlighten his conscience, ask himself once more these questions."

There ensued a deep silence. All the Cévenols, on their knees, their hands clasped, and their eyes fixed on the ground, examined the recesses of their hearts.

These solemn forms were customary in their services. Often, especially on their fast-days, the officiating pastor paused to order one of these acts of self-examination; they were solemn appeals, which ran no risk in these perilous assemblies of degenerating into vain appearances.

Reboul also had knelt down. His forehead leaned on the Bible. Only his white hair and his clasped hands were to be seen.

At length he rose, and when all had risen likewise—"Brethren," said he, "listen to me now; and answer, not me, but God. Are you still decided?"

"Yes," they replied.

"Ready to suffer everything?"

"Yes."

"To avenge yourselves of your oppressors?"

"No."

"Do you hate those against whom you will have to fight?"

"No."

"Will you continue to be the king's subjects?"

"God save the king!"

"Your only desire is to be able to live in peace, bring up your children, and serve God?"

"Yes."

"Do you swear to this?"

"We swear it."

"Well, then, once more, go forward! Go forward with upright hearts and pure hands!—from this moment, the sword may be drawn out of its scabbard."

Reboul had laid hold of his own sword. He half drew it. He stopped.

"My God," said he, "dost Thou sanction it? What if we were mistaken? What if, while we thought to serve Thee, we were going to incur Thy displeasure? But no; Thou wouldest stop us. Thou wouldest not suffer us thus to lose all in this world and the next."

And with a hand that trembled from agitation, now he pushed back the sword into the scabbard; now he drew it again, but slowly, as if he would have postponed the fatal moment when the point should be seen. Once drawn, it appeared to him that war was inevitable, and he was alarmed

at feeling the symbol of it in his power. At last, and this time, it was the point that was seen.

"There it is," said he. Then, in a lower tone:—"My God! when will it return thither?"

But unutterable astonishment was suddenly depicted in the eyes of his hearers. He had himself heard a movement behind him, near a door which opened at the side of the chimney. At the same instant, a hand was laid upon his arm.

"Reboul," said a well-known voice, "put back the sword into the scabbard. It is written, that he that smiteth with the sword shall perish by the sword."

It was Rabaut. How came he to be there? What, then, had passed since the news of his arrest had put the Cévenols into such agitation? It is time that we relate it.

On leaving the Tower, he had been deposited in a room belonging to the Major's apartments. Two sentinels were outside the door, two others were pacing under the window. But even if he had not heard their footsteps, the idea of flight would not have occurred to him. He was annihilated, broken down. A supernatural effort had sustained him, but it had exhausted all the energies of his mind. Twenty years of danger, which he had braved with as much courage as success, had made him, as we have already said, somewhat of a fatalist. No one could be more resigned to the will of God; no one, however, could have been more authorized to believe, up to that moment, that God was with him and for him. He had believed himself invulnerable, and had just seen that he was not. The charm was broken. He resigned himself to his fate. All that remained for him to do was to acquiesce without a murmur, and to die.

He did not murmur; but he had not as yet measured the extent of his misfortune. The greater and the more sudden the fall, the more time it takes to realize it. Only moderate

griefs take up at once in the heart all the room which they are to occupy. It is with the heart as with a vase; drops enter it without difficulty, and yet a torrent, into which you plunge it up to the brim, will only gradually fill it. But from moment to moment he felt the wound growing deeper. In proportion as he recovered from the first shock, he reviewed all that made his heart bleed, and wearied himself by reckoning up all his sufferings.

As for the thought of death, he needed neither to approach nor to shun it. It was an old acquaintance, whether friend or enemy, with which he was too well accustomed to live on familiar terms, to view it as more terrible at this moment than at any other. Death, therefore, was of but little moment to him; but to feel himself torn from those churches of which, next to God, he was the pillar, from that apostleship which had become his very existence, from those brethren in the ministry whom he loved and to whom he was so necessary, from that wife who had shared all his dangers, from that son whose first steps in the same path he had rejoiced to have soon to guide;—there was the poignancy of suffering—there was the anguish.

Then, again, in the midst of his wandering life, he had contracted an invincible need of motion, air, space. Not an hour had elapsed since that door had been closed upon him, and yet he already experienced the *ennui* of a long captivity. He was suffocated in that chamber; he walked up and down in it, agitated and uneasy, like the animal of the forest in its narrow cage; at each turn he took it seemed to narrow beneath his steps. At length he sat down; some tears escaped from his eyes; something of peace descended upon his heart. He had strength to pray, and he thanked God for having restored it to him.

The report of a pistol was heard. M. d'Ambly had shot

himself. The unhappy man had been unable to bear the feeling of his crime and shame. An act of treachery lay heavy on the heart of the old soldier.

It was not, however, with him that the idea had originated. He who had bribed his conscience, as formerly that of Bruyn, was the eternal enemy of Rabaut and of the Protestants—it was Charnay. He happened accidentally to be at Aigues-Mortes in making his circuit. He had been informed of the promised visit to the prisoners by M. d'Ambly himself. The Major, aware of his animosity, had spoken of the circumstance to him as an extraordinary one, but as an affair with which Charnay himself had nothing to do. As for an act of treachery, as he had never thought of such a thing in the course of his life, so neither did he suppose that any one else could think of requiring it of him. Charnay, therefore, took care not to mention it to him at first. He treated the matter as a jest.

"M. Rabaut, really and truly?"

"Really and truly."

"The next thing would be to invite him to dinner, and me with him."

"There is no objection. They say he is very good company; shall I do it?"

But the Jesuit changed the conversation. He felt that after a meal taken together, the proposal to betray his guest would assume such odious colours that the Major would never be brought to it. At one moment he thought of leaving him out of the plot. Nothing was easier than to have Rabaut arrested at his entrance or his exit; but by this means the Jesuit would take upon himself and his party all the odium. He would only adopt that measure at the last extremity, on the formal refusal of the governor. He had, besides, still two or three days before him; nothing obliged him to decide at once.

The very next day, chance, or rather design, threw him in the way of the Major. They conversed for a moment; they were about to separate—"Apropos," said Charnay; "I have thought of you all night."

"Of me?"

"Of you. Do you know, that if people were to know what you told me"—

"By whom should it be made known? not by you!"

"What are you thinking of? But, after all, it may be known. And M. de St. Florentin never trifles."

"Faith! you are perhaps right. All things considered, when this Rabaut comes, I shall have him requested to go away." This was not what Charnay wanted.

"Send him away!" said he. "However, if it came to the point—well, you will think over it."

In the evening they met again at supper at the house of the priest of Aigues-Mortes. The Major took Charnay aside.

"I have thought over it," said he to him; "in truth, I do not well know what to do. To send him away would be singular; to admit him—yes, as you say, M. de St. Florentin is not a man to be trifled with; after having guarded others, I might perhaps be guarded myself."

"You have taken a taste for the business, I think."

"That is exactly why I should not like to change situations; although, to say the truth, Aigues-Mortes appears to me already something very like a prison."

"Are you tired of being here?"

"Pretty well. I have lived at Paris, dear Father"—

"And would like to die there."

"I should like still better to live there—but how? Here I am; I am left here, like a rusty bolt, as I am."

"Good bolts have their value, Major; they are wanted at Paris as well."

"Yes, at the Bastile; but they have enough of them without me, unfortunately."

"There is a place vacant, notwithstanding."

"Which?"

"That of sub-governor, I believe."

"Do not speak of it. You make my mouth water."

"The Bastile is in M. de St. Florentin's department."

"What does that prove?"

"That M. de St. Florentin may give you the said post, if he likes."

"That is evident: but what reason has he to do so?"

"How can I tell? Recommendations"—

"From whom? Who still thinks of me?"

"Some remarkable service"—

"Remarkable service! At Aigues-Mortes? Keeping guard over my five-and-twenty old women?"

"Listen to me. Five-and-twenty heads have been intrusted to you"—

"Yes, five-and-twenty. What of that?"

"Well, if—suppose you were to give up six-and twenty"—

D'Ambly shrunk back, as if he trod on a serpent. But the serpent had bitten him. It was in vain that he went away, casting a look of anger and contempt upon the Jesuit. The poison was in his veins.

Shall we finish, in all its details, the story of his seduction? Shall we relate his sufferings, his long struggles with himself, and with Father Charnay, for the latter gradually proceeded to speak openly to him, to urge, to command, as he had done in the case of Bruyn? We have seen the result of the struggle. M. d'Ambly had arrested the minister; then, overcome with shame and remorse, a shot had put an end to his misery,—at least, on earth!

But why, instead of putting an end to his own life, had he

not simply restored the minister to liberty? He had it in his power—he dared not. He did not even think of it. Charnay was there; Charnay fascinated him by his looks. The old soldier, when he sold his honour to him, had sold his courage, his soul, his whole being. Hardly had he returned to his own apartments with that prisoner whom he dared not look in the face, when he went and shut himself up in an inner room; and it was there that the soldiers, who had hurried thither on hearing the noise, found him dead.

The consequent commotion throughout the whole house was great. Rabaut heard cries and footsteps. A voice that was unknown to him, but the sound of which, harsh and authoritative, reached him amidst the noise, appeared to be giving orders. It was that of Charnay. He had assumed the command of the house, and the soldiers obeyed without a word. Besides, they knew him to be the real general-in-chief of all the troops intended to act against the Protestants.

Suddenly, Rabaut heard something like an altercation between him and another person, who, as it appeared, had just arrived. The people who were coming and going became silent. The two voices drew nearer, more and more irritated.

"Am I then condemned," exclaimed the one, "to meet you wherever any villany is going on?"

"Those who meet me there," said the other, "are apparently already there themselves."

"Yes, those that you urge thither."

"Or that you help me to urge."

"Sir!"

"Yes. Have you, then, forgotten that Cévenol"—

"Indeed! Do you think that because I have been once your accomplice, I am going to remain under your yoke? Let me undeceive you. Treachery failed there; it will fail again."

"Happily, he is under lock and key."

"Really?"

"He is my prisoner."

"There is no prisoner here. There is only a man who has been arrested traitorously, and who shall be set at liberty."

"Would you dare to —?"

"Who is master here, sir?"

"The king; and it is the king's will that a rebel should not be allowed to escape."

"I stand in the king's place at Aigues-Mortes; and the *rebel* shall be let out."

The voice continued to draw nearer. The other speaker seemed to be running after the one who had just spoken.

"Colonel," cried he; "Colonel, look to yourself; it shall all be made known."

"Yes, all, all; do not be uneasy about that. It shall be known that a brave officer has shot himself for having yielded for a moment to your advice."

They had reached the door. Rabaut could hardly breathe from anguish and astonishment.

"Colonel! Colonel!" still cried the Jesuit. "In God's name"—

"In the devil's name, hold your tongue! Sentinels, take him away."

"You shall not open"—

"I shall open."

The door opened.

Overcome by emotion, Rabaut had fallen down on a seat. He could scarcely rise to meet his deliverer.

"Sir," said the latter, "you are free. Go wherever you please, but as quickly as possible," added he, lowering his voice. "Go; in an hour—in less perhaps, I shall be no

longer master. These people know everything, see everything, are able to do everything. You have understood me, doubtless. If Father Charnay"—

"Charnay!" said the minister.

"Yes. Ah! true!—perhaps you do not know him?"

"No."

"I understand; you could not guess. But, at all events, his name is known to you; of his hatred you have had sufficient proofs; as to his power—faith! only he himself knows where it begins and where it ends. Therefore, let there be no delay. I shall see that you are escorted as far as the inn. Get your horse saddled and set off."

"May I at least know to whom I owe"—

"The Marquis de Narniers, sir."

This time Rabaut thought he had fallen from Scylla into Charybdis. Could this name signify anything but a fresh snare? He fell back a step or two. Distrust and contempt were already depicted on his countenance.

"Sir," said the Marquis, proudly, but yet with mildness, "you would insult me; unfortunately you have a right to do so; time is precious, let us not waste it in explanations. When you are in safety, perhaps you will be more disposed to grant me your esteem. Go."

Ten minutes later, Rabaut had left Aigues-Mortes, and was taking the road to Toulon. It was two o'clock in the morning.

At break of day, the Jesuit passed out by the same gate, and took the same road. He had been informed, still by the Major, of the intended visit to the convicts. He was therefore going to see whether he might not be more fortunate at Toulon than at Aigues-Mortes. As he had won over M. d'Ambly, he might win over M. d'Origny; and M. d'Origny, perhaps, would not shoot himself. Of course he would not

tell him why the Major had committed suicide. Then he would know how to manage, so as that the prisoner, once more caught in the snare, should stand no chance of escaping.

But his project was destined to fail at both ends.

First, the superintendent at the galleys was not a second d'Ambly. Charnay was a week at Toulon before he ventured to touch upon his subject. When he did at last venture, M. d'Origny was long before he even understood him, and afterwards had very nearly thrown him out of the window. This was the cause of M. d'Origny's ill-temper at the time of the arrival of the convicts from Toulouse, for the scene had just taken place.

Rabaut, on his part, hesitated very much whether he should go to Toulon. He was sure of the superintendent; but Charnay might lay hold of him through others. He was pursuing his road, however, when, at the house of a friend on the way, he found letters which summoned him to Toulouse. He went thither, therefore, and without delay, for they related to very serious matters. He was there while the news of his arrest was spreading throughout the province; it was from thence that he arrived at the moment that we have seen him enter the house of Reboul.

CHAPTER X.

How can we describe the joy of his friends? Their projects have sufficiently shown how dear he was to them. This joy, however, was not without alloy in all of them. The most ardent—those who had eagerly longed for the moment of throwing off the yoke—foresaw, and not without foundation, that his deliverance would change the intentions of the greater number. They had risen up on his account; he was safe, and the scrupulous or the lukewarm would begin once more to preach submission. His look, his first words to Reboul, his well-known habits, all announced, likewise, that he would be the first to preach it.

Reboul had half obeyed. He had not replaced the sword in the scabbard; he had only laid it upon the table.

"Friends," resumed the pastor, "what have I learned? Plans of insurrection! plans for war!"

"For your sake," said Reboul.

"For my sake, I know it; I have been proud of it, too proud perhaps. That which years of suffering had not effected, the news of my misfortune has done in a few days. What a reward, my friends, for the little that I have been permitted to do for you and for your cause! How eager I ought to be, you think—for I have already read it in your eyes—how eager I ought to be to enter into projects to which I have given rise! But, you see, it is not I who will not have it so, it is God. He has permitted you to take up arms for my sake,

and at the very moment that you were going to put your hands to the work, I am here! Do you not believe that it is He who sends me? and if it is He, who can dare to think that it is not to stop you?—But, Reboul, what is the matter with you?"

Reboul sat down sorrowfully.

"It is all over," said he, "it is all over. We have lived slaves, and slaves we shall die."

"And we shall rise free—have you forgotten that, Reboul?"

There were others who had forgotten it as well as he. When men have had a glimpse of liberty, even though it is to be attained through seas of blood, it is not all at once that they can come back to the humility of the slave, and the resignation of the Christian.

"Reboul is right," said a voice.

"He is right," repeated five or six others. "To suffer for ever—to wait for ever—we will not bear it."

"We will not bear it," said almost all of them.

But Rabaut, who was bending down over the old man, had drawn himself up at these last words. He had moved back a step, his arms folded. A feeling of repentance was springing up already even in those who murmured.

"You *will* not?" said he. "As you please. Go; but remember one thing—you go not with my blessing."

They bent their eyes to the ground.

"Forgive us," said some of them.

"Forgive you?" resumed he, in a milder tone. "It is not me whom you have offended. May God forgive you, indeed! and if it be only needed to ask Him, I am ready.—*We will not!* What! who are we, worms of the earth, to say, 'We will not'? How long is it, then, since God has ceased to have the sole right and power to will? For, after all, even

if you had the right, my friends, have you the power? I did not speak to you at first of the obstacles to be surmounted; I wished that a nobler, a more Christian motive should act upon you beforehand; but these obstacles are absolutely insurmountable, unless you reckon upon prodigies. Did you hope to raise the province? Undeceive yourselves. The province is not what it formerly was. Indifference, attachment to the comforts of life, fear, in short, since the whole truth must be told, have penetrated everywhere. Beyond your mountains, the most zealous would tremble. If you were the victors, what means would you have of profiting by your success? If vanquished, you would be completely crushed. Your brethren would pity you, perhaps admire you; but as for joining you, they neither would nor could. No, my friends, let there be no illusion. The time is not yet come. Will it ever come? God only knows; but it is not for us to hasten it otherwise than by our prayers."

The irritation of feeling had subsided, but it might be followed by depression. Rabaut therefore did not leave the subject till he had restored to his hearers, as he knew so well how to do it, that serenity of mind which alone constitutes true courage and true resignation. He raised them by faith above the miseries as well as the joys of this world. There were no more illusions, but also no more of that mere human violence which had rendered them necessary. The past was dark, the future darker still; but they cast all upon God, the great comforter of all who suffer.

He then related to them his visit to Aigues-Mortes, his captivity and deliverance. They prayed together, and separated. It had been agreed that they should send to all parts of the country to give notice of his return, and of their giving up all projects of a rising. An hour later, a simple supper was served up on the same table on which we have seen the

sword and the Bible. Rabaut, his host, and two friends, had just seated themselves round it.

"Well, dear pastor," said Reboul, "you come from Toulouse. How are our concerns going on there?"

"Very badly."

"So there is no hope?"

"I do not think there is."

"Poor Calas!"

"Poor Rochette!"

"We had almost forgotten them these last few days."

"To think only of me."

"Ah! you see that you—you"—

"Say no more about it, Reboul.—Kind friends!"

He pressed his hand, and they remained a moment silent.

"You were thinking of me," resumed he; "well, I, too, was thinking of you. Do you know what was one of the things that pursued me at Aigues-Mortes during that interminable hour? Precisely the thought of the happiness I had so often enjoyed in the evening, after fatiguing or perilous days, under the hospitable roofs where I passed the night."

"And is not mine of that number?"

"Is it not, indeed, Reboul!"

"But it is very sad, now. My poor children! If you had only seen them at Toulon—for they are, I think, there—they must have arrived. What good you would have done them!"

"Take courage, Reboul. God is with them."

"And with us—when you are with us."

"When I am with you! Why not always?"

"You see that we were going to commit an act of folly."

They spoke of other things; subjects were not wanting. Besides perils and sufferings, there were all the details of the internal administration that we have seen restored by Antoine Court, which had at this period reached a degree of regularity

that would have been admired in the midst of peace. Every church had its consistory, the inflexible guardian of discipline and morals. Without a consistory, it would have ceased to rank in the number of churches. Such was the bearing of a decree of 1723 : "Seeing that in towns and other places where there are no elders, scandals and disorders have taken place, it has been resolved that they shall be immediately established ; and in default of so doing, and if there should be refusal on the part of the congregation, they shall neither be visited by the pastors, *nor informed of the assemblies, so that they may attend them.*" Shall we say that this was severe? Let us rather say sublime, and we shall be nearer the truth. Appoint elders, or you will not be convoked to attend those assemblies, which lead straight to the galleys or to death. Never had the language of honour said more in fewer words and with less pretension.

The consistories had a great deal to do. Their principal avocations were the registering of births, deaths, and marriages, the finances, charities, superintendence of morals, organization and police of the assemblies for worship. It was a state within the state ; but a state whose existence depended upon its being unrecognised. The simplest matter of business was complicated by never-ending precautions.

Thus Reboul and his guests, all three elders for the district, had a thousand things to ask the pastor. If the Governor of the province could, by chance, have heard their conversation, he would have been not a little surprised at the extent of the field which their zeal had opened up despite of so many edicts, decrees, and spies.

"You do not speak of your son," said Reboul. "Shall I die without seeing him again ? without having heard him preach?"

"I hope not. His studies will soon be over. You will see him, please God, in spring."

"A minister?"

"No; but about to be one. We shall ordain him in France."

"A proud day for me, Reboul!"

"And for the Church. Who will ordain him?"

"Can you ask me?"

"I guessed. May God be with him and you!"

They rejoiced, throughout the country, at the return of Rabaut's son, who was studying, as we have said, at the Seminary at Lausanne. He had shared, while yet a child, the fatigues and dangers of his father. Although he had been absent for ten years, his precocious talents were remembered, and they delighted to think of them as matured by age and study.

When supper was over—

"You wish," said the minister, "that I should tell you how things are going on at Toulouse?"

"I beg your pardon," said Reboul, interrupting him. "We have only known matters imperfectly, and are not even sure whether the little we do know is quite correct. Would you be good enough to begin from the very beginning?"

"Willingly; I will go back, if you like, to the arrest of the pastor Rochette. You knew him, did you not?"

"Little personally; but well by reputation."

"He deserved it. He was—I dare not now say, *he is*—he was one of the most devoted and able men amongst us. He had officiated in the first instance in the churches of the Agenois, then in those of Quercy. Afterwards, at our last Synod, on the 3d of June this year, we had decidedly allotted to him the district of Montauban, and the surrounding country. It was at that assembly, where he acted as secretary, that I saw him for the last time.

"Three months of his ministry had sufficed to give him a

favourable and remarkable influence over this new field of labour. He seemed to multiply himself in proportion to the wants of his Church. He was everywhere; he did everything. I was informed, a few days before his imprisonment, that he purposed holding twenty different meetings in the course of a few weeks.

"On his arrival at Caussade, on the 13th of September, he was sent for from the country to baptize a child. His usual guide, Viala, went to reconnoitre the neighbourhood, and returned, towards midnight, with an inhabitant of the place. They were met by a patrol of the city guards, became confused, said that they were waiting for another person, and that they were going to Montauban. The pastor, who was coming to meet them, was questioned likewise, and answered, which was true, that he was going to St. Antonin. This contradiction appeared suspicious. All three were arrested.

"At Caussade he underwent a fresh interrogatory. He might have told a falsehood, but would not save himself by lying. He gave his name.

"The Mayor and Consuls were alarmed at their capture. Two of them, formerly Protestants, wished to let him go quietly; the others, although Romanists, had no wish to give him up to the Parliament. It was tacitly agreed that he should be allowed to escape the following night. All at once the report spread that the Protestants of the neighbourhood were about to arrive in arms to deliver their pastor. The alarm-bell sounded; they took arms in haste. Troops of people paraded the streets; they went so far as to hoist the white cross—the emblem which recalled the League and St. Bartholomew. The alarm-bell was rung likewise for four or five leagues round the country. The Romanists flocked in from all sides; they came to protect Caussade from the fury of the Protestants.

"The Protestants, however, did not arrive. No one could affirm that so many as four had been seen together, still less that a single one had been armed; and it is a fact that there has not been the slightest trace of this pretended invasion. But, meanwhile, the Consuls had been forced to put their prisoner in a place of safety. All Caussade guarded the prison. Our friend was lost.

"He was not to perish alone.

"Horrible menaces had been pronounced against us. Some Protestants had been attacked in their own houses; others had even been obliged to repel force by force. No blood had been shed; but a single blow would have sufficed to bring on a massacre.

"Whilst the Protestants of Caussade were barricading themselves in their houses, the rumour reached Montauban that they were going to be murdered, that it had perhaps already taken place. Three brothers, *gentilshommes verriers*,* of the county of Foix, happened to be in the town. They were informed of the pastor's arrest, and of the exasperation of the Romanists. They set out for Caussade, armed with their fowling-pieces. What were they going to do there? They did not know; but it is certain that three men alone, with no other arms than their fowling-pieces, could have had no intention of attacking a large village, full of soldiers; and no one observed that they made any attempt to procure companions on the road. They were seen from a distance, attacked, and disarmed; and now they are, as you know, at Toulouse, under capital accusation. Their enemies say it was a case of armed rebellion; and the Parliament is quite ready to give sentence accordingly."

* *Gentilshommes verriers.*—The glass manufacturers had the privilege of nobility in France. Their rank was inferior to the four other orders of nobility, namely, *La noblesse d'église, d'épée, de robe, et de clocher.—Trans.*

"But," said Reboul, "will not their friends interfere? For, after all, they must have friends. They certainly have"—

"Many. Everything has been done. It is on their account that I have just been at Toulouse, where I had already been two months ago. I have myself directed all the steps taken; I have spoken myself; I have made others speak. All is useless; they will perish. As for the pastor, we must not hope to obtain anything from his judges. The law is explicit; if they even wished to save him, which is by no means the case, they could not. At the very utmost, we may hope for the gallows instead of the wheel for him.

"It was, therefore, necessary to apply to higher quarters. The governor, the ministers, the king, have been harassed with our petitions. I have written myself to the Duke de Richelieu, the Duke de Fitz-James — even to Madame Adelaide, the king's eldest daughter. It is said that she has once or twice manifested some pity for us. I have said everything to her in favour of our unhappy friend that I could imagine most likely to touch her feelings, without offending her piety, which is not the most enlightened; no answer. Has she even received my letter? M. Court has not been able to ascertain. Meanwhile, the trial is going on; perhaps the sentence is already drawn up."

"As yours would now be," interrupted Reboul, "if you had remained in their hands; but we should have torn it to pieces, or sacrificed our own lives."

"Reboul, in God's name, say no more of those projects."

"Yes, you are right; let us say no more of them."

He sighed. The Christian acquiesced; but the Camisard continually revived.

"It remains for me to relate the beginning of Calas's trial to you. In the other we have only iniquitous laws and inex-

orable judges against us; in this, our enemies have already accumulated all the horrors and all the follies of fanaticism.

"You know the Calas family. It consists of the father, who is universally esteemed, an amiable and pious mother, and children who have not all of them repaid their parents' care. The third son, Louis, had become a Romanist; the eldest, Mark Antony, led a detestable life—idle, dissipated, gloomy; unable to derive pleasure from anything, even the very profligacy in which he sought amusement. He was very intimate with Bruyn, who used to be called my *Judas*, but who has since so thoroughly obliterated the infamy of a moment. As for the former, he was condemned to sink from error to error, down to the very bottom of the abyss into which he was to drag his father after him.

"It was the 13th of October; I had been at Toulouse for some days, quite occupied with Rochette and the three brothers Grenier. I had seen the Calas family during the day; the father had asked me to go and see his son, and unite my efforts to his own to induce him to change his course of life. I had been taken to his room, and found in him a man degraded by wine and debauchery; deaf to exhortation and entreaty, to the voice of religion as well as that of nature. I had even left the house without seeing his father again, so certain did it appear to me that there was no more hope. Did the unhappy being understand me better than his manner would have led me to suppose? Did I contribute, by showing him the horrors of his condition, to his determination of getting out of it by suicide? Perhaps. Everything may turn to poison when the mind is poisoned.

"In the evening, towards ten o'clock, passing by chance through the same street, I heard cries. I ran to the spot; but as several persons had already stopped before the door, prudence obliged me to remain at some distance. You know

I am always like a scout in an enemy's country. The door was half open; the crowd drew back with alarm. Behind that door, at the entrance of the office, a man was hanging. I recognised Mark Antony. At the same instant I perceived young Lavaysse, a friend of the family, getting up on a table and cutting the cord, while some other persons received the corpse in their arms. The watch arrived; the crowd was pushed back. The family and some neighbours alone remained in the office, trying, but in vain, to bring the young man back to life.

"Two of the capitouls* arrived at this conjuncture, Lisle de Brive, and David de Baudrigue, the latter well known for his animosity against us. And yet they were there more than a quarter of an hour before either of them dreamt of suspecting assassination, or seeking for proofs of it. It was the same with the crowd; no one around me had as yet said a word contrary to the universal opinion, that the wretched man had hanged himself.

"The capitouls went away; they had not even drawn up a written statement of the facts. Suddenly a voice from the midst of the crowd cried out that Calas was to have abjured shortly, that he had died assassinated, and that the assassin could be none other than his father. One of the capitouls shrugged his shoulders, and went away; the other, David, stopped, then ran after him, brought him back, and thus in an instant gave an alarming consistency to the rumour which had just been spread. Immediately, without any further examination, and notwithstanding the representations of his colleague, he had the whole family arrested, young Lavaysse and a female servant included. They were taken to the Hôtel de Ville. The corpse was conveyed thither likewise, and, con-

* *Capitoul* was the name given to the head magistrate at Toulouse.—*Trans.*

trary to all rules, then only was a written statement of the facts drawn up.

"I had remained amongst the crowd; I had watched, not without alarm, the fearful progress of an opinion which at first had only appeared to me absurd. Every instant fresh details were given of the pretended conversion of Mark Antony, of his intentions of abjuration, of his *martyrdom*—for that name was already being given to his death. At the end of an hour it would have been dangerous to seem to hold a different opinion from that of the multitude.

"I went away, however, more distressed at this hereditary fanaticism than seriously uneasy as to the fate of the Calas family. The inquiry into the case, thought I, however partial we may fear it will be, cannot but soon establish their innocence.

"I had reckoned without the clergy. It is the custom in the Church of Rome that, in the case of serious crimes whose authors are unknown, the members of that Church shall be solemnly summoned, under pain of excommunication, to come forward and depone whatever they may know or suspect on the subject of the fact in question.

"This summons, which is generally accompanied by the details calculated to facilitate research, is what is called a *monitory letter*.

"One was sent out hastily. This document, which was signed by the Vicar-general, departed so much from the ordinary forms, that I could not help thinking at first, either that it was not genuine, or that the contents had been falsified. I knew the hatred of the priests; but I had imagined them more clever in concealing it.

"It began by supposing, as admitted and incontestable, that which had first of all to be proved, namely, that the death of Calas was not by his own hand. This laid down,

without openly designating the father as the assassin, the questions were arranged in such a manner that the answers must necessarily bear upon him.

"Finally, as, according to the usual course of jurisprudence, all articles presupposing the crime to have been committed, and all information foreign to these articles ought not to be included in the inquiry instituted, the door was closed against evidence for acquittal.

"Soon, as if it were not enough to have raised up a barrier beforehand between the truth and the judges, one would have said that the latter desired to condemn themselves not to admit it, if even it should force its way through this barrier, and reach their consciences, as evident.

"The *monitory letter* had supposed it proved that Calas died assassinated. The capitouls went a step further; they took upon them to affirm that Calas died a Romanist, or at least on the point of becoming one. They ordered, consequently, that the body should be temporarily interred in *holy ground*, and that in the churchyard of St. Etienne, the Cathedral of Toulouse, for the greater solemnity.

"The priest made objections. The Catholicity of the deceased, he said, was anything but proved. Notwithstanding the *monitory letter*, no priest had as yet affirmed that Mark Antony had made any overtures to him on the subject of abjuration. In what a false position would they then find themselves, if, after Catholic obsequies, they should come to the certainty that the deceased had died a Protestant; if, above all, after having paid all those honours to his remains that the Church refuses to those who have committed suicide, they should be forced to allow that he had died by his own hand? But that was precisely what their hatred had vowed not to admit. These considerations were set aside, and it was decided that the funeral should take place.

"The impulse had been given. Fifty priests, with tapers, banners—in short, all the paraphernalia of solemn funerals, came to take the body at the Hôtel de Ville. An immense crowd followed them. The body was presented at the church. Holy water streamed on the coffin. The people could no longer doubt—Calas had died a Catholic; Calas had died a martyr to his faith.

"The next day, masses began for the repose of his soul. Churches, convents, confraternities, became animated with holy emulation. The white penitents, amongst whom, it was said, that Calas was to have enrolled himself immediately after his abjuration, distinguished themselves particularly. I was present at his abominable comedy, which was but the too certain prelude of a fearful tragedy. Their church was hung, not with black, but with white. Was it not to be manifest to the eyes of all, that the day was a festival, and that the deceased had entered heaven in triumph? In the middle, a magnificent tomb of state had been erected; the skeleton of a man was standing on the top of it. In his right hand he held a palm, the symbol of martyrdom; in the other, a label, on which might be read in large letters—*Abjuration of heresy.* All the convents, all the confraternities of the town and neighbourhood, sent their deputies to this gloomy spectacle. The whole country was on foot. The populace, whose imagination had been powerfully excited, prayed, wept, and expressed their indignation. Our poor friend's sentence of death might be read upon all faces.

"And yet what had been the man of whom they were thus endeavouring to make a martyr and almost a saint? The whole town was acquainted with his profligate character; every one had pitied his father. Had any improvement been observed in his conduct of late? No. Such as he had been seen for years past, such he had remained till his death. The

neighbours could attest it. The evening before his death had been spent at a gambling-house; he had returned home as usual, taciturn, and with an unsteady step. Thus, not merely was there no proof that he had thought of becoming a Romanist, but this design, supposing it to be true, had been accompanied by no change in his conduct. He had lived a libertine, and he died a libertine.

"But hatred does not investigate so closely; besides, the Church of Rome has never been very scrupulous in the choice of her heroes. The conduct matters little, provided there is faith, or the semblance of it. What Calas had been, mattered very little, provided his death furnished an opportunity for exciting the fanaticism of the populace, ruining some Huguenots, and reviving, in short, some of those calumnies which have pursued us for two hundred years past. Not satisfied with accusing us of parricide, our enemies insist that a secret law exists amongst us, by which parents are obliged to put to death those of their children who wish to go over to Romanism. Where have our adversaries seen, I do not say this law—since they pretend that we keep it secret—but the actions which might appear to be the result of it? The converters have torn from us enough of children, enough of young men, and how many of them have been seen assassinated up to the present time? If even it could be proved that Mark Antony had died by the hands of his parents, it would be but a solitary crime; neither we nor our Church ought to be responsible for it. Nevertheless, there will soon not be a Romanist at Toulouse, but will speak of this sanguinary law which has been imputed to us, and believe in it as if he had read it, as if he had heard us preach it. I have been obliged to take up the pen, in order to try and destroy, in the minds of some at least, these odious prejudices. A pamphlet that I have just finished, is being secretly printed

at Toulouse. Will it produce any good effect? I do not dare to hope for much. Some are too blind to be enlightened; others have gone too far to draw back.

"We have, however, a moment of hope. The capitouls having ordered, on the 18th of November, that Calas, his wife, and his son Peter, should be put to the torture, the accused appealed from their judgment, and the Parliament, on the 5th of December, annulled the sentence of the capitouls; at the same time removing the cause to its own tribunal, and ordering the affair to be remanded for further inquiry.

"We began to breathe, but it was only for a short time. The legal proceedings, which had been carried on with such partial information and so incorrectly, were maintained; and shortly after, a fresh publication of the monitory letter was ordered. Thus, the work of the capitouls is continued by the Parliament. The grounds of accusation are equally false, the mode of proceeding equally irregular, the bitterness of pursuit the same against the accused and ourselves, but accompanied by more strict formalities.

"We have, it is true, more friends than might be supposed, but the greater number dare not come forward. That which is only seen in general in times of revolution, is now taking place at Toulouse: the violent, the populace, dictate public opinion. Those who on other occasions have been seen most inclined to despise the decisions of the mob, are now those who seem most disposed to think that the voice of the people is the voice of God. 'You are all for Calas,' said one of our enemies to Councillor de la Salle, the only one who has not followed the stream. 'And you all for the people,' answered M. de la Salle.

"Such, my friends, is the state of things. The Calas family is in strict confinement; all communication with them is impossible. Receiving no advice, being ignorant of all that the

judges think proper to conceal from them, they fall into some fresh snare at each examination. Harassed with questions on insignificant points, which none of them had thought of impressing on their memory, they are not always strictly agreed; and these contradictions, collected together and magnified, go to increase the amount of facts beneath which it is purposed to crush them.

"I have no more hope; but I shall contend to the very last. If their blood must flow, at least I am determined that it shall not flow in vain. Who knows, if in the designs of God, their death may not be one of the conditions of our deliverance?"

CHAPTER XI.

It was nearly midnight, and Rabaut was to set out again before daybreak. The two friends took their leave. The pastor went up to his room.

This room, situated on the first story, had but one window looking out upon a little garden. It was furnished, besides, with every means of escape that the premises would admit of. At the window, there was a rope ladder always rolled up behind the inside shutter. In a wardrobe, there was a secret door leading either to the cellar or the attics, according as the fugitive might wish to go up or down. Finally, behind the bed, in case the house should be at once surrounded and invaded, there was a last refuge. It was a long, low hiding-place, the entrance to which was on a level with the floor of the room, and skilfully concealed in one of the panels of the basement. There, lying down in the wall, and breathing through a crevice, the person concealed, might defy the search of his enemies for a day or two.

Rabaut was occupied, before going to bed, in noting down his itinerary of the day following. He had a multitude of people to see, and affairs to settle; and as he was very anxious to return to Toulouse as soon as possible, he wished to manage so as not to lose one step or one moment.

It was cold. The solitary house, the uninhabited room, the oppressive silence of night, all concurred to add, to the chill

which takes possession of the frame, that other chill which takes possession of the mind.

Rabaut had finished, and yet he did not rise from his chair. He experienced that vague fear which keeps us and nails us down to our seat, as if afraid of the noise we should make by moving. He listened, without stirring, to the sighs of the wind, the rustling of the dry leaves that were blown about by it in the garden, and to the old clock which he heard beneath him in the kitchen; the regular ticking of which contrasted strangely with the disorderly sounds from without.

It seemed to him as if, for a few minutes past, he had heard something which was neither the sound of the wind nor that of the leaves. This noise, which came from the garden, had continued between two gusts of wind, but had then suddenly ceased, as if it had perceived that it was about to betray itself, and must wait for a fresh irruption of the gale.

Twelve o'clock struck, and immediately, as if on a given signal that had been expected, the noise seemed no longer to conceal itself. There could be no doubt left. There were footsteps and voices. Rabaut ran to the window. He fixed his eye at a small opening made in the shutter; but he saw nothing. The night was dark. Scarcely could the tops of some trees be perceived, whose leafless branches were traced out against the dark sky. But the footsteps and voices drew nearer. At the same moment, a violent knocking was heard at the street door; that of the room was half opened. It was Reboul. "Flee or hide yourself," said he, and went down hastily. But Rabaut had no choice left. The garden was now lighted up; soldiers and armed peasants were distinctly seen. To flee was impossible; but it was important to let it be supposed that he had fled. He opened the door of the secret staircase, left it open, and shut himself into the hiding-place. From thence he could only hear a confused sound.

He felt by the shaking of the walls that the door had been broken in. Then there was a tumult within the house. The staircase trembled beneath heavy footsteps; the butt-ends of muskets were heard upon the floors. At last the door of the room opened noisily. Several persons rushed in at once.

"Here it is!—Come in!" cried a voice.

Rabaut now knew that voice. It was the voice at Aigues-Mortes, the voice of Father Charnay.

After having been repulsed at Toulon, Charnay had returned quite furious to Pont-de-Montvert, his head-quarters, as Inspector of missions in the country. He had heard, but only the same evening, of the meeting that was to take place at Reboul's. Not being able to assemble immediately, and without noise, a force sufficient to seize forty men, he had resolved to wait till at least one-half had gone out. But, while this was going on, he learned that a man on horseback had just been seen near the village; that the same man had been met shortly afterwards going through the street on foot and entering Reboul's house. There could no longer be a doubt: it was a pastor.

Charnay instantly changed his plans. In the assemblies of the Protestants, he knew that the rule always was to let the pastor escape. He therefore decided on leaving the meeting in peace, for, even were it reduced to a few men, they would perhaps still find means to conceal or tear from him his prey. Thus he would let all escape, provided the pastor was taken.

It had been remarked, that he alone wore a cloak. In spite of the darkness of the night, he might therefore be recognised, followed, and seized on going out. Two men, crouched down in the dark a few steps from the door, had waited for him in vain; whence they concluded, which from the first had appeared probable, that he would pass the night in the house.

About eleven o'clock, some of Charnay's agents had one by one slipped into the garden; others, stationed in the street, were ready to draw near at the first signal. Charnay had, however, decided that they should wait till midnight. The pastor would be in bed, thought he, and they would have a more easy prey.

"Here we are!" cried he, therefore, as he rushed into the room, where a bed, a chair before the table, and a lamp burning, showed that he had reached the object of his search. But his foot was still on the threshold when he stopped, breathless and confounded.

"No one here! no one!"

Then immediately, perceiving the back staircase—"Very good," resumed he, "we have it. He certainly cannot have gone out; either he is above, or below."

Some of the men went up the staircase, others, the abbé at their head, went down. Soon after, they had all returned. There was nothing to be seen in the attics; nothing in the cellar either, except a door which led to the garden, and of which they remarked that the bolt was drawn. But the sentinels without had had their eyes on that door; they said it had not been opened.

It was Reboul himself who, on the first alarm, had found time to go and draw this bolt, in order to let it be believed that Rabaut had escaped that way. The artifice had succeeded. Notwithstanding the denial of the sentinels, they began to believe in his escape.

Charnay had sat down, in a state of terrible agitation, on the chair where Rabaut had so recently been seated writing his notes. His fist clenched, his arm stretched over the table, his eyes fixed upon the wall, he scarcely listened to the reports made to him. Of what consequence were the details? the conclusion remained the same. He had missed his object;

he had but to gnaw the bridle that God had once more put upon the risings of his hatred. From time to time he threw off his stupor, and his eyes kindled with gloomy hope.

"Have they gone up to the roof?"

"Yes, Father."

He once more became motionless.

"Have they searched everywhere?"

"Yes, Father."

There was silence again.

"Have the walls been sounded?"

"Yes, Father."

"Everywhere?"

"Everywhere—oh! not in this room."

To rise, seize a stick, and strike hard rapid blows wherever he could reach, was the work of a moment with him. But the walls kept their secret. He had struck too high; for the hiding-place was, we may remember, on a level with the floor. Besides, the panel which formed the door of it was so placed as not to give a more hollow sound than the adjoining ones on being struck.

The Jesuit sat down again. "I feel cold," said he. "Let a fire be lighted."

"Here?" said one of his people.

"Here—Ha!"

A new idea had struck him. What if the fugitive should perchance be in the chimney? It was by the chimney that the pastor Lafage, in the environs of Monoblet, in 1754, had tried to escape. As he came out upon the roof, a ball had broken his arm. Three days after, he was hanged at Montpellier. Charnay hastened to despatch two men out upon the roof; he himself arranged the wood; he himself lighted the fire. But the men returned alone; nothing had come out of the chimney—but smoke.

All at once he remembered Reboul. Though he had missed the pastor, he had another victim. According to the tenor of the edicts, Reboul must go to the galleys, and his house be levelled with the ground. This was what had happened to the Protestant Novis, in 1754, for having given an asylum to Lafage.

"Bring him to me," said Charnay; "perhaps we may get something out of him."

He did not hope it, for the old man's firmness was well known; he intended to try. Some carnivorous animals delight in playing with their victims.

"Well," said he to Reboul, "so he has escaped?"

"I have already thanked God for it, sir."

"You will thank Him for it at the galleys; do not forget, you will have time enough."

"You think, then, that I shall remain there long, sir?"

"For life, indeed! You do not, then, know the law?"

"Yes, I do; but it reaches me rather late in the day. I am eighty-three, sir. *For life*, at my age"—

"Your property is confiscated."

"What should I do with it? I am going to the galleys, and my heirs are there already."

"Your house will be pulled down."

"'*If our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have in the heavens*'"—

"Be silent."

"Do you mean to silence St. Paul?"

"Be silent. Where is he?"

"Who?"

"The minister."

"If I knew, you may be sure I would not tell."

"And you do not know?"

"I do not."

He said this the more confidently, that he did not indeed know whether Rabaut was hid, or had succeeded in escaping.

"But, in short," said Charnay, in a tone evidently more gentle, "could you not give us some hint? We would willingly forget, on our part, that it was at your house."

"Yes; but I should never forget that I had committed an infamous action. Do you not think that would be quite as bad as your galleys?"

"You wish, then, to go there?"

"I desire to die as I have lived, whether here or at Toulon. And yet, you are right, I do wish to go there. I shall not feel it hard to be there—first, because it will be on account of my faith, and next, for M. Rabaut's sake."

"For whom?" cried Charnay.

But he had only heard too well. His eyes started out of his head; he threw himself upon Reboul, and shook his arm convulsively.

"Rabaut!" he cried. "Was it Rabaut?"

"Yes, it was," said the Cévenol quietly. "Did you not know it?"

In fact, Charnay had no suspicion of it. He imagined that Rabaut was at Toulon, or the neighbourhood; nothing could have led him to suppose that he had followed him so closely in the Cevennes. Only too glad to lay hold of a pastor, he had never thought of inquiring the name of the one who had just escaped from him. If, however, Reboul had imagined he did not know it, he would have taken care not to tell him.

His fury was beyond all bounds. He reproached himself aloud for having taken his measures so ill. He sent for his soldiers, for the peasants; he asked them for fresh details, in a terrible voice, and did not listen to them. He wished to go up again into the loft, down again into the cellar, to search every corner himself.

Amidst all this violence, he had once more forgotten the aged Reboul. The latter had remained in the room, guarded by two soldiers, who did not dare to speak to Charnay to ask for orders. They conversed, meanwhile, with their prisoner. These men seemed but little pleased with the part they were called upon to act in the country. They thought that French soldiers might have had something better to do at that time than to help the purveyors for the scaffold. On the whole, they would have preferred serving under Marshal Soubise, beaten and turned into ridicule as he was, to conquering under a Jesuit, and taking prisoners of eighty-three.

"And you do not know where he is?" repeated the priest suddenly, as he came back and planted himself before him.

"I do not know," said Reboul.

"Ah! you do not know, indeed. You will not speak? Wait a little; we have opened the mouths of more obstinate people than you."

"Of cowards."

"For the last time—Will you or will you not?"

Reboul only shrugged his shoulders.

In the twinkling of an eye, Charnay bound him to the chair with the rope of the ladder. Then, tearing off his shoes and stockings, he dragged him to the fire.

The soldiers did not conceal their horror. Charnay made the tongs red-hot. M. Machault had done the same, we may remember, to force revelations from Damiens. Reboul had turned pale. He was heard praying in a low voice.

"You are praying, I think?" said Charnay, as he arranged the fire.

"The Abbé Chayla prayed too."

"When?"

"When we put him to death, Abbé Charnay, for having done to some of our people what you intend doing to me."

"Do you think, perhaps, to intimidate me?"

"It would be easy enough, I think; you are already quite agitated."

"I?"

"But be calm; we do not assassinate now. When vengeance is sure, why should we hasten it?"

"Vengeance! what vengeance?"

"Do you believe in God, sir?"

"Be silent, wretched man."

"Well, do not ask upon whom we rely. Your tongs are red-hot, abbé."

Charnay took them.

Meanwhile, Rabaut heard and saw all this. By the same opening which enabled him to breathe, he saw, from under the bed, the fire, and Charnay bending down before it, and the bare feet of the unfortunate Cévenol. His resolution was taken. He would not allow the sacrifice to be accomplished. At the first cry, the first groan of the victim, he would cry out to the executioner to stop, and give himself up to him.

But the executioner hesitated. Several times he had taken the tongs, and several times, as if not finding them hot enough, he had put them back into the fire. The tone of his voice, which became more and more threatening, but ill dissembled his embarrassment. He was evidently struggling against some feeling. Was it pity? Perhaps, for—we are bound to say so—it was the first time that he was about to inflict torture with his own hand; but it was also, and still more, at the thought of the danger that he risked bringing down upon his own head. On one hand, the remembrance of Chayla; on the other, the limits of his powers as Inspector, which did not by any means comprehend that of inflicting torture, still less that of inflicting it with his own hand. The gentle-

men of the Parliament had always shown themselves very jealous of this right; and it was not the moment for the Jesuits to quarrel with them on account of an unnecessary usurpation.

Rabaut, one hand on the bolt, the other on his bosom, as if to stifle the noise of the throbbings of his heart—Rabaut, we say, did not lose sight of him. His strength and courage were exhausted by this cruel suspense. He was accustomed to expose his life; but to see it, hanging as it were by a thread, and a thread that he must cut as soon as a furious man should please to tighten it, was more than he could bear. He felt suffocated. He was obliged to exercise the greatest self-command, not to burst open his hiding-place, if only to breathe freely.

Suddenly there was a great noise. Reboul, silent and motionless, had triumphed. Charnay had not ventured to go beyond threats; he had risen and thrown aside the instrument of punishment, as if to punish it for its impotency. He then rushed to the door, and his step was heard on the stairs, unsteady from rage.

Some minutes after, his people carried off the Cévenol.

Some days after, his workmen threw down the house. They found the hiding-place; it was empty. And while the house was being demolished, the proprietor arrived at the galleys, where his two grandsons awaited him.

While the galleys were receiving fresh guests, and death was hovering over the prisoners at Toulouse, the cause of toleration was nevertheless making great and singular progress in certain circles.

Singular, indeed; for nowhere was the levity of the times more strangely exhibited.

It had become the fashion to pity the Protestants; but no one thought of putting an end to their sufferings—no one, at

least, amongst those who held in their hands the power of relieving them.

There are people who write in the most touching manner upon benevolence, and yet are far from being benevolent. Is it hypocrisy? Sometimes; but most frequently it is thoughtlessness. Speak to them of poverty; they are all tears and heart. Speak to them of the poor, and for the poor; they will look quite surprised that there are any. This was the case, a hundred years ago, as regarded the intrepid remnant of French Protestantism. The more their misfortunes formed a contrast to the refinements of the day, the more people allowed themselves to be affected by them as by a tale of other times. Their martyrs were pitied, but as those of the first centuries, or, at the very utmost, as those of China or Japan. Sometimes even, as we have had an example further back in our narrative, people really were in error as to the period of their sufferings. The author of the *Honnête Criminel* had imagined he was bringing upon the stage a fact already remote. He believed that his hero must have been dead at least twenty or thirty years. Marmontel, from whom he had had the story, and who suggested to him the idea of making it a subject for the theatre—Marmontel himself held the same opinion.

This piece, however, which we have seen that the hero himself considered not to be above mediocrity, had some success at Paris. It was, take it altogether, one of the best specimens of that mongrel style which Diderot had brought into fashion, and which has been well characterized by the term *drame bourgeois;* a false style, if ever there was one, because it had retained the stiffness of the classical play, although the heroes were chosen in lower life, where the pompousness of the old style had nothing to excuse it. Add to this, exaggeration in the sentiments, bombast in the style, and we have

what a period of decline was simple enough to consider as an improvement upon the noble faults of Racine's theatre.

The *Honnête Criminel* was the piece in fashion. It was not, however, acted in public, it only appeared on the stage in 1768. Had the Government prevented it? We have not been able to ascertain. Be this as it may, the impression produced was only the more general. People who would have been satisfied with going to see it acted, read it over and over again; and, in short, every one wished to know the speeches in it by heart. They were tolerant with the *Honnête Criminel*, just as they were pious with the *Petit Carême*, or admired the country, with St. Lambert, at the fireside, or shepherds with Boucher and Watteau, astronomy with M. de Fontenelle, ancient Rome with M. de Florian, animals with M. de Buffon, nature and truth, in short, with whoever excelled in spoiling them both.

From Paris, the piece had passed to Versailles, for it was Paris now that gave the tone to Versailles. Ladies had it on their toilet-tables, dandy Marquises in their pockets. It was soon to reach the king.

Nothing had been changed for a year past in the king's private life. He became every day more difficult to amuse; and every day the favourite bestowed more art and more pains upon the task. She had often enough sung the *Devin de Village* to him; she took up the idea of acting the *Honnête Criminel*.

These private theatricals, known under the name of *Spectacles des petits cabinets du roi*, dated from 1747, the third year of Madame de Pompadour's reign. She had shone at Etioles, upon the little theatre of her uncle, M. de Tournehem; she wished to have an opportunity of obtaining the same success under the eyes of the king. She soon formed her *troop*, for it was thought amusing to take and keep that

name. The first who composed it, were the Duke de Chartres, the Dukes of Ayen, Nivernais, Duras, Coigny, the Count de Maillebois, the Marquises of Courtenvaux and d'Entraigues. They were less rich in actresses. There were only, besides the Marchioness, the Duchess de Brancas, the Countess d'Estrades, and the Countess de Marchais. Of singers, only three; Madame de Pompadour, Madame de Brancas, and the Duke d'Ayen. At first, therefore, they selected in the way of operas, acts suited to three persons, such as Bacchus and Erigone, Ismène, Eglé, &c. Finally, the manager was the Duke de la Vallière, and the prompter, the Abbé de la Garde, librarian and secretary of Madame de Pompadour.

They began with Voltaire's *Enfant Prodigue*, but so secretly that the author himself did not know, for four or five days, how the piece had been received. He had little need to be uneasy about it. The Marchioness had chosen it; the Marchioness acted it. Louis XV. was enchanted. He even decided, on this occasion, that the actors might be applauded in his presence, which had been up to that time forbidden, as well in private as in public. It was the first privilege conferred on these private theatricals, and the privilege, according to the ideas of the Court, was immense.

The number of spectators, originally limited to five or six, was never considerable; several years, indeed, elapsed before ladies were admitted. Their presence would have brought back etiquette, which the king wished, above all things, to banish from these parties; the king alone had a stated and distinguished seat, and therefore there could be no distinction of rank as to the places of others.

But if this simplicity was kept up, more or less, on the side of the spectators, it was not the same on the side of the actors. In 1750, we find them set up on a magnificent scale as regarded musicians and dancers. The *corps de ballet* comprised

as many as twenty persons, some belonging to the Court—amongst them the Marquis de Courtenvaux, *first dancer*—and the rest, professional dancers from the opera. Twenty male and female singers had been likewise recruited there. The orchestra, finally, was composed of thirty musicians, one-third of whom were amateurs, and twenty professional persons, all the most distinguished.

This continued for some years. The king, although at last the Court had been admitted to the entertainment, still fancied himself quite in a private circle, like Louis XIV., who, amidst all the magnificence of Marly, had considered himself to the very last as in a very plain château, where he came to rest after the grandeur of Versailles.

All at once, Louis XV. became aware that he was quite as *ennuyé* there as elsewhere; he concluded, thence, that *private* theatricals only differed in name from the former grand representations of the Court.

Then, all that had gradually been added to their original plan was set aside. The troop became once more what it had been at first; some names were added, others taken off the list, till there were, at last, just enough left to recite the *Honnête Criminel.*

The king had heard the piece spoken of—of course not the hero, for he was even less disposed to trouble himself with what had become of him than any one else. He had consented that it should be acted at Bellevue, in one of those evening parties, where he liked to see his Court reduced to seven or eight persons, only occupied with him, only amusing themselves to amuse him, only laughing, conversing, or eating, to induce him to converse, eat, or laugh.

The piece was admirably adapted to be acted in private. There were not more than six characters; one scene only, representing the sea, with a house on the right and left, in

order to allow of the actors coming in and out; very little or no action, but soliloquies without end, abundance of sentiment, all that could best flatter the vanity of the actors, by offering to each in succession the opportunity of distinguishing himself. It is true, that had it been quite otherwise, volunteers would not have been wanting. It was a great thing at Court to appear on this little theatre, by the side of the Marchioness, before the king. The most insignificant part was coveted as the highest mark of favour. "I had, on one occasion," says Madame du Hausset, in her Memoirs, "to solicit an appointment for one of my relations; but Madame de Pompadour did not like asking for anything from M. d'Argenson. Urged by my family, who could not conceive it difficult for me, in the situation* I occupied, to obtain a small appointment for a good officer, I made up my mind to wait upon the minister. He received me rather coolly. As I was going out, the Marquis de V——, who had heard my request, followed me. 'You wish for an appointment,' said he. 'There is one vacant, which is promised me for one of my *protégés*. Will you make an exchange of favours? I will give it up to you. I wish to be the sergeant'—and, seeing I did not understand the jest—'This is the case,' resumed he; '*Tartuffe* is going to be acted, and there is, as you know, the part of a police officer. Get this part for me, and the appointment you wish shall be yours.' The thing was done. I had my appointment; and the Marquis thanked Madame as if she had made him a Duke."

Thus, both Dukes and Marquises were quite delighted to be called Champagne or Frontin at Bellevue. Frontin was the classical name; and therefore Fenouillet de Falbaire, author of the *Honnête Criminel*, had not failed to give it to one of his valets. The said valet had only to recite eleven

* Madame du Hausset was waiting-woman to Madame de Pompadour.

lines; another, only two; a third had only to rush upon the stage to support a lady in a fainting fit. But the fainting lady was the Marchioness, and who would have ventured not to covet the honour of receiving her in his arms!

But it would have appeared to her too simple to choose only among the people who offered themselves. It was very little only to be amused by the piece, which was, besides, not very amusing; she must be amused by the actors themselves, or at least by some of them. This was a way of making those whom she could not reach otherwise, feel her power.

The Marquis de Narniers had returned to Versailles. The change that had taken place in his character and ideas had not escaped Madame de Pompadour, before his departure for the south. Without being by any means a religious, or even a serious man, he was no longer the young harebrained man who had been seen devoting himself, body and soul, to the worship of Court favour.

The bishop could not understand his nephew's indifference for what had hitherto been all in all to him; he saw in the change one more folly to be added to so many others. "You are quite ruining yourself," he said to him, when he observed that he was weeks without attending either the toilet of Madame de Pompadour or her circle.

"Well, good day, Marquis," said she, the first time that he appeared after his return. "You have not been seen for a long time."

"I was in the south, Madam. I had to visit my regiment, and attend to various matters of business at Aigues-Mortes, where I have the honour of commanding for the king."

"Very good; but I think you returned several days ago."

"Three or four days, Madam."

"And have not been seen till to-day?"

"Business—a visit to my uncle"—

"Oh! I ask no questions. Yes, by the way, one: will you do me a little service?"

"Madam"—

"You know, or perhaps you do not know, that we are to act a new piece one of these days before the king—*L'Honnête Criminel.*"

"Before the king!"

"Before the king. You, who are becoming, they say, such a good friend of the Protestants"—

"Madam"—

"It is, as you see, a good action, and you will be glad to join in it. All the parts, unfortunately, are distributed. M. de Marigny is André; his Grace the Duke of Orleans is the Count; the Marquis d'Entraigues is M. d'Olban; the Duke de Richelieu is Lisimon, the father of André."

"No, Madam, no indeed!" cried the Duke, who was talking a little way off.

"We are not speaking to you," said the Marchioness, laughing.

"No; but I hear."

"You have promised."

"Not at all. I—a part! I—verses!"

"A great matter, a hundred lines!"

"A hundred and fifty at least."

"Have you counted them?—Very good: that is a sign that you are thinking of learning them."

"No, indeed."

"To return to the subject, M. de Narniers. There remain three valets; two are already taken, you shall be the third, if you please."

M. de Narniers bowed.

"This evening," resumed she, "we rehearse."

"This evening? But how—my part?"

"You are mute, my dear Marquis!"

"Indeed!—mute?"

"Mute. The burden, you see, is not a heavy one."

"How do you know that, sister?" said Marigny.

"But"—

"Mute! on the contrary, it is very hard—a woman should know that."

"Naughty man!"

The Marquis could but bow a second time. He was definitively enrolled into the Bellevue troop. He had nothing left but to order a smart footman's suit.

Nevertheless, amidst these futile engagements, the Court was not gay. The choice of a pathetic piece—instead of the absurd plays usually got up at Bellevue—was, perhaps, in itself, without the Marchioness being aware of it, the result of the gravity of circumstances. They were, indeed, very serious.

"If you want news of our armies," Voltaire had written, in February,* "the regiment of Champagne has fought like a lion, and been beaten like a dog. If you want news of our navy, our ships are being taken every day. If you prefer news of our finances, we have not a sou."

In December, it was still worse. Winter had suspended the war; but the year following threatened to be harder and more ruinous than any preceding one. The *Pacte de famille*, of which we have already said a few words, had excited the greatest irritation in England. "Spain must immediately bear the penalty of its alliance with France," said the English; and British avidity had already calculated how much might be taken from it in ships, treasure, and colonies. Pitt, who was the organ of all this hatred and these hopes, had asked for war; but he was the only member of the cabinet who wished

* Letter to M. d'Argence de Dirac. February 24, 1761.

for it immediately. He had retired. His resignation, which was given in with great parade, had only served to urge on public opinion. His successor, Lord Bute, who formerly desired peace, not only with Spain, but even with France—Lord Bute, the leader of the Tories, had yielded to the influence by which all were carried away. Spain was to be attacked, and France, in virtue of the *Pacte de famille*, was obliged to defend her.

Thus, at the same moment that the regiments which had served in Germany were slowly returning, discouraged and reduced in numbers, to refit in their exhausted country, it was necessary to think, for the next year, of the south as well as the north, of sea as well as land, and that without any of those warlike illusions which give strength to the weak, and courage even to cowards. Spain must be assisted by those who felt they had brought her troubles upon her, and would not be able to save her. It was necessary to fight, in a word, with the certainty that, with both success and bravery, no decisive advantage would be obtained. Although the last campaign had not been without glory, not only had the question not advanced a single step, but there was even less progress visible than at the beginning of the year. The blood of the nobility had been shed in abundance; families in mourning asked themselves what had been gained by it. They raised their eyes towards the throne—pensions descended thence, but nothing more. There was no enthusiasm for France to be expected from the king, no real interest in those who fell on the field of honour, none of those words that go to the hearts of brave men, with which the Béarnais rewarded his followers.

Two parties divided the Court. Marshals de Soubise and de Broglie had returned from Germany, accusing each other for the reverses of the army. Both had committed faults;

both were guilty of that fault which is the greatest and most inexcusable,—they had been defeated. Both might have been, perhaps ought to have been, disgraced; but if there was a choice to be made, Soubise was incontestably the first to be sacrificed. It was he who, at Fillinghausen, had been the cause of the loss of the battle by neglecting to occupy certain defiles, and leaving his colleague to fight alone for three hours; it was he who, although personally brave, being quite incapable of conceiving, and yet more of executing, an extensive plan of warfare, had continually deranged those of Marshal de Broglie, even when he did not wilfully thwart them. What a French army then was, can only be seen in the memoirs of the times.* Except personal courage, which was not even very general amongst the common soldiers, there was scarcely anything left of all that constitutes a powerful army, able to do great things. When the moment of fighting came, they fought well; but till then, there was not the slightest wish to engage. Months, whole seasons were passed in marches and counter-marches. These were Turenne's tactics, but without his genius; it was the art of war arrived, like all the arts, by dint of refinement, at a state of complete sterility. It needed a complete regeneration, and Marshal Soubise was not by any means the man to accomplish it.

But he was Madame de Pompadour's friend; he had been appointed, supported, even directed by her. Had she not often sent him plans for the campaign, drawn up by herself—maps, on which she marked down with black patches the towns to be taken, and places to be fortified? Therefore, it was not he who was mistaken, but fortune. His rival, consequently, had just been deprived of his command, and exiled.

This was quite sufficient to cause the displeasure of the public—hitherto nearly divided between the two—to fall

* Those, in particular, of the Count de Bezenval.

with all its weight upon the Marchioness's favourite. Marshal de Broglie, who had been forgiven as soon as he was sent into exile, became in a few days a great captain and a hero. The two lines of Voltaire's *Tancred*—

> "On dépouille Tancrède, on l'exile, on l'outrage;
> C'est le sort d'un héros d'être persécuté"—

were eagerly applauded. His successor, whoever he might be, was condemned already. Public malice deprived the army beforehand of whatever confidence and enthusiasm it might have recovered in spring.

Even at Court, where none could think of contending against the all-powerful influence of the Marchioness, Marshal de Broglie had more friends after his fall than he ever had before. Madame de Pompadour could not but be aware, that if he owed some of them to his own merit, he owed the far greater number to a wish to mortify her, and to the very distinctions which she so largely bestowed on his rival. She asked herself, therefore, not without some alarm, whether she had not united her interests too closely to those of an unfortunate general, whose past misfortunes were already laid to her account, and whose future misfortunes might involve her in the same ruin with himself.

> "Kind Marchioness, you try in vain,
> From Soubise' brow to wash the stain;
> In vain your favours he may share,
> Defeat has mark'd it deeply there.
> Though Pompadour would wash him white,
> With all her credit, pains, and might,
> 'Twill still be said at Court, in town—
> 'Tis Frederick's iron lays him down."

Thus did the courtiers rhyme, and both Court and town sang the same song. And the time was past when it might be said: "Let them sing, provided they pay." No; popular songs at that period were but the weapons of the advanced guard. A whole army was behind, whose banner was the

Encyclopædia, destruction its word of command, the future its field of battle. France had been called in days gone by "an absolute monarchy, tempered by popular songs;" but the country, without being aware of it, had passed under the absolutism of ideas, which made popular songs themselves some of its most powerful instruments.

It was thus that every question of the present or the future diminished or increased in importance, according as individuals were attacked in institutions, or institutions in individuals. A mighty movement ended in a couplet; a couplet contained in it the germ of a mighty movement.

CHAPTER XII.

The Duke de Richelieu, unable to withstand the caprices of the Marchioness, had begun to study his part. He still hoped not to act it; but as for refusing formally, he could not venture.

Besides his reluctance to figure, at his age, in an exhibition of this kind, he dreaded, not without reason, the treachery of his memory, and his entire incapacity as regarded verse. The rules of prosody were to him like those of orthography; he had never been able to remember them, and had never felt them,—in our days, we should say he had not that organ.

He had no other way of distinguishing false quantities but by scanning verses on his fingers. If listening or reciting, a foot more or less was all the same to him. From this cause, even when speaking perfectly well, his distrust of himself was so complete, as to set him wrong at every turn. Few men in conversation could express themselves with more facility, but this very facility was a snare in verse. He perpetually changed the words, and the words he substituted never failed to be either too long or too short.

He had spoken to the king of the difficulty in which he was pressed to entangle himself. The king had quite decided upon not allowing a duke, an old general officer, to make a fool of himself; but as the preparations for these private theatricals had always amused him more than the plays them-

selves, he had appeared not to disapprove of the Marchioness's extraordinary project. He liked very much to have the parts rehearsed to him in private; he showed, it would appear, some talent and animation in these little lessons. The Marshal himself could give them pretty well;* but as for receiving them, he felt that he should prove but a poor scholar.

He had therefore begun in time. When Madame de Pompadour had spoken at her toilet, as reckoning upon him, she knew even more than she said. The king had told her in confidence that Richelieu was already learning his lesson, and that he himself heard him repeat it.

That same evening, about an hour before the expected rehearsal, the king and his first lord-in-waiting were chatting together at the fireside. The king was in rather good humour, which happened usually when he thought he had enough to fill up his evening. The Marshal, contrary to his habit, seemed rather absorbed. This gave additional cause for good humour to the king, who called him a young beginner, and was amused at his apprehensions.

"Well, after all," said Louis XV., after having done his best to help him out with one of the long speeches of old Lisimon, "do you know that this piece is not worth the deuce?"

He threw it upon the mantel-piece. It was a pamphlet in octavo, in that coarse, grayish, yellowish paper, on which all that was not a costly edition was printed at that time. We may remark, by the way, that paper has taken a long time to become civilized. Not so much as a hundred years ago, the most refined Marquises wrote their *billets-doux* on a sort of coarse paper that a corporal in our day would despise.

"You may well say so, Sire!" answered Richelieu, in a lamentable tone.

* He had, as first gentleman of the chamber, the superintendence of the royal theatres.

"Don't complain too much. Your part is the best—I mean to say, the least positively bad. Besides," added the king, laughing, "acted by you."

"Your Majesty intends to finish me quite."

"You are very modest, Richelieu."

"You are very cruel, Sire."

"*Par pari refertur.*"

It was another malicious trick of the king's to speak Latin to the Marshal. He knew but very little himself; but we may remember that Richelieu did not know even a word.

"I beg your pardon?" said Richelieu.

"Well, I am only paying you back. Were you not laughing at me when you told me that I sang well?"

"How?"

"There is no *how* in the matter. You were laughing."

"Me, Sire!"

"'Moi, Seigneur, moi, que j'eusse une âme si traitresse!'" *

said the king, reciting. "Come, Cinna," pursued he, "let us have no exclamations."

"'Sieds-toi; je n'ai pas dit encore ce que je veux.'" †

"Say it, then, Sire."

"Well, then, one day that M. Rousseau's *Devin de Village* had been rehearsed at the Marchioness's, I was humming I do not know what air. 'Well,' said you, 'very well!' and at last I believed you. All at once what did I see in the glass?"

"What, Sire, did you really see?"

"Very good. *Habemus confit*"—

"I beg your pardon?"

"I saw—what you remember very well, as I perceive—I saw my first gentleman of the chamber, my admirer, a moment

* Corneille's *Cinna*, Act V. Scene 1. † *Idem.*

before—I saw him making signs that people should stop their ears. Did I see correctly, your Grace of Richelieu?

"'Tu te tais maintenant, et gardes le silence,
Plus par confusion que par obéissance.'"*

"Go on, Sire."

"What?"

"Your part. I am waiting for '*Soyons amis.*'"†

"Have we ceased to be friends?"

"Oh! Sire, that is still more magnanimous."

"Well, since we are friends again, and that the first proof of friendship is candour"—

The king shook his head.

"Finish the sentence, Sire."

"The truth, dear Duke, obliges me to tell you that you have all the requisites for spoiling—a part in itself not worth much."

Richelieu appeared astonished. Notwithstanding his dislike to repeating poetry, his vanity had led him to suppose he did not repeat it badly.

"Yes," resumed the king; "since the author has put so much stiffness into it, at least the actor ought not to take from it the little nature that is left. You have far too much of the fine gentleman about you, Richelieu, to act the character of an honest old man."

"Let them release me from the honest old man's character, then. I shall be pleased enough."

"No, by no means! Come—these lines once more—and let us try to put a little less effect where only feeling is wanted."

Richelieu rose, walked away a few steps, then returning with the look of a man seeking for something, recited:—

* Corneille's *Cinna*, Act V. Scene 1. † *Idem*, Scene 3.

——— "'Voici donc le rivage
Où mon fils est venu languir dans l'esclavage.'"

"That is better," said the king.

"'Votre bras, O mon Dieu, l'aura-t-il soutenu
Au milieu des horreurs'"—

"More gently! More softly!"

——— "'d'un destin si funeste?
Le reverrai-je? Ou bien, dans le séjour céleste,
Lui payez-vous déjà le prix de ses vertus?'"

"Ta—ta—ta—ta; you are up in the clouds."

"Who? The poet or I?"

"Both; besides, here is another absurdity which I had not observed."

"Where?"

"It is a Protestant who is speaking. The Protestants never say *you* to God."

"You are right. Poets are continually doing the same thing. Our Greeks and Romans are not more like Greeks and Romans than that same Lisimon is like a Protestant."

"You should say that to your friend Voltaire."

"Yes, if I wished to make him my mortal enemy. If we were to believe him, it is he who has revived the manners, language, and colouring of antiquity. 'Corneille,' he says, 'had some idea of it; Racine, not the least,' which is, by the way, true enough. He has gone to the original sources—and after all, if we except some slight shade of difference, it is just the same thing. The Greeks would not recognise themselves better in *Mérope* than in *Phèdre;* the Romans, better in *César*, than in *Britannicus*. He says, that in *Mahomet*, he has painted the manners of the Arabs; in *Zaïre*, the manners of Christians and Mussulmans; and we should only have to change names and to modify some few details in order to make his pretended Arabs Christians, his Christians Arabs,

and his Mussulmans either Christians or Arabs. We breathe a false atmosphere, Sire."

"Yes," added the king, "and that is the worst description of falsehood which speaks in the name of truth. What you were saying of the theatre might be said of all the writings of the day. In the days of fiction, it was truth concealed beneath falsehood; now-a-days, when everybody has become a reasoner, it is falsehood that hides itself under the appearance of truth. But come—it will soon be the appointed hour—we are expected at the Marchioness's. Be natural, Richelieu. You have just been preaching very well—preach a little by your example."

Madame de Pompadour was indeed waiting for them, but occupied meanwhile with other things. While the King of France was talking of poetry with an old courtier by the fireside, his mistress, with two ministers of state, was engaged in drawing up the budget and discussing plans for the campaign.

The Duke de Choiseul, whom we have seen minister for foreign affairs, had been for some months minister of war. He had kept the two departments for a time; then, giving up the former to the Count de Choiseul-Praslin, his relative and creature, he had taken that of the navy—a sinecure, as some wits said, since the English had relieved France of her ships and her colonies. Berryer, his predecessor, had only made blunders while in office. As meddling as he was inefficient, he had but completed the ruin of what was still called the fleet. But he was, like M. de Soubise, Madame de Pompadour's *protégé*. When the navy was taken from him, the seals were given him. Thus, a lieutenant of police had been made minister of naval affairs; and from minister of naval affairs, he had been turned into a chancellor. Such was, indeed, the history of all public offices. "A calculator was wanted; a dancer was appointed."

But the most important department, and at the same time the one in the most ruined condition, was that of the finances.

We have seen the king contending with M. de Silhouette, the comptroller-general, on the subject of the retrenchments required of him by the latter in the expenditure of the Court. M. de Silhouette had effected considerable reforms, which only served to open the eyes of the public to the enormity of abuses. Thus, for instance, the linen for the use of the king and the royal family was renewed every three years. It cost considerable sums; and the linen that was set aside passed into the hands of the chief attendants while almost new. It was decided that it should last five years.*

The reforming minister had been praised to the skies. "If M. de Silhouette," wrote Voltaire to Thiriot, "goes on as he has begun, he must have a niche reserved for him in the temple of glory, quite close to Colbert." Alas! he had begun by retrenching the money for play; and this money, as we have seen, had only taken another road to come back into the prodigal hand of the king. It was the same thing, more or less, with all the improvements that the comptroller-general had thought of.

The king was not even satisfied with taking back with one hand what the other had let go. Yielding to a temptation, of which we would fain believe that he did not see the extent of the shame, he had considered it allowable to seek in speculation a resource for supplying the secret exactions of his luxury and debauchery. He had formed, or sanctioned, the formation of a complete system of agency with this object. His name, scarcely concealed, figured in the most dishonourable speculations. It had cost him but little to enter upon it; to go on was easier still. Five years later, so little care was taken

* Necker had it decided that it should last seven years.

even to keep up appearances, that the name of a *treasurer of corn on account of his Majesty* was in the Royal Almanac. Considerable monopolies were made in several of the provinces under the name of this agent; and public rumour, as might have been expected, did not fail to magnify the profits. Never did prince trifle more imprudently with unpopularity.

But to return. Instead of obtaining a niche in the temple of glory, Silhouette had not remained a year in office. After some weeks of that easily won popularity which is never withheld from those who appear to mean to do well, he found himself once more, like others before him, with empty coffers and an exhausted country. These coffers had to be filled. Silhouette could think of no better way of doing this than by calling every one to the great work, and every one had complained—those who had always paid taxes, because they were not now to pay less; and those who were called upon to begin to pay, because they were accustomed to leave it to others. The people imagined that by dint of trying, money would be found at last without their giving it. It was quite the same story as that of an indignant expostulator who said to the Abbé Terray, one of the successors of Silhouette, "What! my lord, would you take the money out of our very pockets?" to which the abbé replied very candidly, "Where else, then, would you have me take it from?"

But for this, the new system was a good one. It very much resembled the one which experience has since caused to be adopted. A general system of taxation, according to determined proportions, was to reach all landed property, that of the nobility and clergy included. The citizen was to pay for keeping his shop; the nobility for keeping carriages and footmen. The usual personal tax, the old *capitation*, was to be tripled in the case of bachelors who were in the receipt of a certain income. Special duties were to be laid upon articles

of luxury. It was, in fact, equality introduced by taxation, before it was introduced by the laws and manners.

No one would hear of it at such a cost and under such a form. The edict, registered by force, could not be put into execution; and the comptroller-general, driven to extremities, had been induced to commit deplorable acts of violence. The sinking fund, public deposits, all that was within his reach, disappeared in the gulf, and disappeared without its being even seen of what use were these desperate measures. He had at last retired from office, overpowered by curses and sarcasms. "What a schemer is that Silhouette!" wrote Voltaire; "the translator of Pope's 'All's Well' soon made me see that all is ill." Trousers without pockets, which were then worn, were called *des culottes à la Silhouette*. Portraits representing the shadow instead of the reality were called, and the name has been preserved, *des Silhouettes*.

To turn him into ridicule was easy; but no one ventured to hope to do better. Bertin, lieutenant of police, had to be entreated long before he would succeed to Silhouette. When diseases are hopeless, only quacks come forward, and Bertin was not one of these. "You will not be comptroller-general?" said the king one day to him. "It is a proof that you know the place." He accepted at last; and, as he had promised nothing, he was the more easily forgiven for finding out no remedy. One fact may show what a degree of exhaustion the treasury had reached; at his entrance upon office, Bertin had not literally found a single crown to carry on public affairs. Five hundred thousand francs lent by the Prince de Conti provided for the most urgent necessities. Shortly after, we find the comptroller-general negotiating with the Jews of Strasbourg. They offered some millions; and would have been satisfied with four per cent. interest *a month*. They were refused with indignation. But the army in Germany was

without money or supplies. The Jews would abate nothing, and the minister was about to sign. At last, news arrived that the squadron of the Marquis of Conflans, after being roughly handled by the English, had returned into harbour, and could not for a certain time go to sea again. The money embarked for the pay of the crews was quickly sent for, and despatched beyond the Rhine. A defeat became a fortunate event.

It was, then, Bertin, who, at the period to which we have been brought by this story, held the finance department. France had at last become accustomed, like the king himself, to this irremediable state of distress. No one now thought, while rolling down hill, what might be found at the bottom. The comptroller-general was the driver. No one expected him to stop the course of the car: provided he avoided the worst jolts, every one was satisfied.

Like Colbert, he even found time and money for things not strictly in his department. He founded the veterinary school of Alfort; he encouraged and extended the manufactory of Sèvres; he encouraged likewise the formation of agricultural societies throughout the kingdom; he employed the Marquis de Bréquigny to collect documents in England, relating to the history of France in the Middle Ages. Madame de Pompadour delighted in sharing the glory of these undertakings. She patronized trade through Bertin as she did the arts through Marigny. Whether the real motive was zeal or self-interest, still it was from her that the few great or useful works proceeded which were still undertaken in France.

She had just spent an hour or two with Choiseul and Bertin. They had brought with them—the one, the budget of expenses; the other, the budget of receipts; and as usual there was a difference of about half between the two.

"Have you thought of nothing, found nothing?" she said.

"Madam," replied Bertin, "to think of expedients would be easy. M. de Silhouette thought of expedients enough, and you know what it all came to."

"But, in short," resumed she, "this state of things cannot last for ever."

"Nor have I, you know, bound myself to remain for ever in office. I mean to lighten the present, if possible; but it is evident that I can only do it at the expense of the future. Once the war is over, I retire."

"In that case," said Choiseul, "we stand the chance of keeping you a long while."

"Take care. I said that I would not willingly abandon my post before peace was established; but supposing the war to last, it might possibly become untenable—a hint to your Grace. My business is to find money. I have found and shall still find it. But—the strings are stretched dangerously tight."

"Bah!" said the Duke. "You financial men"—

"Money, Duke, is"—

"*The sinew of war?* it is an old adage, my dear comptroller."

"Change it; I should be all the better pleased."

"The sinew of war is"—

"Is what?"

"Is daring."

"Bravo!" said the Marchioness. "Well, dear Duke, what are we going to dare?"

But neither the Marchioness, in crying "Bravo," nor the Duke in speaking of daring, had any real confidence in daring measures. The game was lost. There was now nothing left but to fall without dishonour.

"In the first place," said he, "if Spain loses, which is certain, the greater part of its colonies, it must get some

indemnity in Europe. I have provided for this indemnity. By one of the secret articles of the *Pacte de famille*, we recognise the King of Spain's right to the sovereignty of Portugal, in the event that he can and will take possession of it. If we urge him to it, he will; if we assist him, he perhaps can. At all events, this will be a powerful diversion; England, to support Portugal, will at once be engaged in a war, in which we shall only take the part that may suit us."

"That is a means," said the comptroller, "of giving breathing-time for a month or two; still, the troops that you will lend the King of Spain to assist him in taking Portugal, must be found and equipped. What next? either one thing or the other,—the expedition will succeed or it will fail. If it should fail, which is probable enough, we are beaten in the south—a bad prognostic for success in the north. If it should succeed, so much the better for the King of Spain; but what would we gain by it?"

"Time," said Choiseul, "time—which is often more valuable than money. Whilst all eyes are fixed upon Portugal, a new alliance may be concluded with the states which have kept aloof from the other. Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Sardinia, all the neutral states have had to complain of England, all are in reality on our side. It is not with us, however, that I should ask them to form an alliance"—

"It would not be very tempting," muttered the comptroller-general.

"But between themselves," pursued Choiseul. "A mutual guarantee between all the neutral powers, this is what I wish for. Before six months are over, without our having any need to interfere in it, England, with its bravadoes, will have obliged this alliance to take up arms, and then we shall find ourselves at the head of all the maritime resources of Europe."

Bertin shook his head.

"The plan does not want for grandeur. Events may perhaps justify you, but if not, where does it lead us? With all the maritime forces of Europe, shall we be so superior to England, as to be sure of vanquishing her? No, no! Peace, my lord, peace, at any price, and as soon as possible."

"Peace!" cried the minister. "Then we must begin by destroying that treaty which has cost us so much labour."

"And will cost so much blood."

"We may recover the loss of blood—but never that of honour."

"France has sustained her honour often enough."

"She can do more yet."

"She will, if you command it, but not on her own account. Now it will be on yours, to satisfy your vanity."

"What do you mean, sir?"

"Yes, you are thinking of yourself, and only of yourself, now. That treaty is your work. You will not allow that it comes too late, or too soon—too late to be of use; too soon not to complicate our present embarrassments. Honour, say you, honour forbids us to yield. Well, another year or two like the one about to close, and you will see whether we shall not be obliged, whether we will or not, to consent to all that England may demand. I do not know what honour may require of us at this moment, but what it requires of you, is not to force us on to our ruin."

The Duke was accustomed to this violent language.

"Sir," said he coldly, "as to what concerns the question of honour, you will allow me to take no other judge than myself. As for the rest, I confess I was not aware that you agreed so well with the friends of the King of Prussia; but you will grant me, in your turn, that no one would expect to find such sentiments in the council of the King of France."

"Well, I cease to belong to it!" cried the comptroller-general. "My resignation shall be in the king's hands in a quarter of an hour."

"Who wants me?" said the king, who was coming in, followed by Richelieu, and had heard these last words.

"It would seem that the council is being held here," added he, turning an inquiring glance towards our three personages, who had risen on his appearance.

He seemed, however, to be more surprised at the time chosen than at the thing itself. Madame de Pompadour had never concealed from him, except in case of having particular reasons for doing so, her deliberations with the principal ministers. He liked to trust to her, and have only to confirm afterwards, in council, what had been already agreed upon between her and them.

"Come, Sire," said she; "come, and make peace."

"Peace!" interrupted Bertin. "Thank you, Madam. I accept that word as a good omen. Yes, Sire, come and make peace, not between the Duke and myself—which is of very little consequence—but between France and Europe. I have examined, Sire, as far as I am concerned, our situation for next year. It is disastrous, it is untenable."

"Come," said the king, sitting down, "are you speaking seriously? For ten years past I have been told the same thing. *Disastrous—untenable;* and yet we hold on, after all."

"Till we can hold together no longer."

"It will last"—

He was about to repeat his abominable phrase: a glance stopped him. The Marchioness was distressed at this incurable egotism. She wished to rule; but the more she felt the need of power, the more, also, it was her interest not to allow it to become degraded in the person of him who was its source.

"But," resumed he, "it is not exactly for that purpose that we come, Madam."

"One moment, I entreat, Sire."

"Let it be, then, one moment.—What were you saying, M. Bertin?"

Choiseul was anxious to keep Bertin in the ministry. He esteemed him as a man and as an administrator; besides, he saw no one to take his place.

"Sire," said he, without allowing him to answer, "M. Bertin wishes for peace."

"And I, also," said the king.

"We, also—we all," resumed the Duke. "We are agreed in substance; and this is by no means a time to quarrel about details."

"Details!" muttered Bertin. But the minister and the Marchioness, at the same moment, cast upon him a look, half imperious, half supplicatory. He was silent.

"We were talking," resumed the Duke, "of a plan of campaign."

"Already!" said the king. "In winter?"

"I should not be astonished, Sire, if the Spanish colonies were already attacked by the English."

"War is not yet declared."

"It is about to be declared; and our neighbours are not very nice. We already know something of that."

"True. How many ships did they take from us in 1756, before the official rupture?"

"Nearly three hundred, Sire, without counting three ships of war."

"And how many have we lost of the latter during the last five years?"

"Ninety-three," said Bertin.

"And we have left—?"

"Ah! Sire," said the comptroller-general, without paying any attention to the irritated looks of the prime minister, "we have just enough left to give a little glory to those who take them from us."

"Be silent, sir!" cried Choiseul. "You calumniate France."

"I tell the king the truth."

"Our navy"—

"Where is it?"

"Where is it? Listen to me, listen to me, Sire. In a year I shall have eleven new ships of the line which will not have cost you a farthing."

"What do you say?" exclaimed the king. He was beginning to rouse himself a little.

"Eleven, Sire, eleven. I have sounded the corporations in several provinces, the town of Paris, the company of the Farmers of the Revenue, that of Annuities, and all those bodies are ready to offer each its ship. You will see, sir," added he, addressing himself to Bertin, "you will see whether France is as completely lifeless as you dare to assert."

"Well, Sire," said the Marchioness; "eleven ships—what do you think of that?"

"I think that there is enough to increase a little the glory of which M. Bertin spoke."

"What, Sire! you likewise"—

"Do you really think that those who have taken ninety-three will not take eleven more?* but, however—yes—it is a handsome gift. These provinces and companies are richer than we are."

"It will produce an immense effect," resumed Choiseul. "Eleven ships so furnished are worth more than twenty-two or thirty built at the expense of the state."

* "Poor France, with your ships from the provinces! Make provision of coffee and sugar; for you will soon pay dear for it."—*Voltaire.* Letter to d'Argental, March 1762.

"I must see," said the king, "under what form I can thank all these people, for every question has two sides; they must be thanked. A king thanking his subjects! Never mind, I shall thank them. Eleven ships—yes, it will be worth while. Eleven—why not twelve?"

"The twelfth is quite ready, Sire; but as for accepting it, that is a very serious question."

"Who has offered it?"

"The Protestant Committee."

"A serious question, as you say."

CHAPTER XIII.

A FEW details are necessary in this place.

For some years past, it had been thought that the embarrassments of Government might be turned to account in order to bring about the cessation of religious persecution.

A bank was first proposed. The Discount Bank, whose operations had been suspended by the war, might be set up again by means of funds furnished exclusively by the Protestants. This bank, being founded with the king's authorization, and acknowledged as a public establishment, would be an immense step towards their admission to civil rights.

The Marshal de Belle-Isle, then president of the council, had received the first overtures favourably. It was already at his suggestion that the king had created the order of *Military Merit*, in favour of the Protestant officers, who were necessarily unfit for receiving the cross of St. Louis. The idea was generous, but extraordinary. To create an order of knighthood for people who had been deprived even of the right of letting out horses!*

A person of the name of Cotin, of whom we have no further knowledge, had been commissioned by the Marshal to follow up the business of the bank. Several letters from this agent have been found amongst Rabaut's papers. "It would be easy," he wrote, in July 1760, "to find three or four millions for an undertaking involving no risk; the more so as this is

* Edict of June 16, 1681.

the only means that the Protestants have of drawing upon them the attention of the sovereign, or meriting kindness from him." It was still more strange, as we see, than the institution of an order. That toleration which had been refused them for eighty years, as contrary to the laws of God and the sacred rights of the Church, was now offered them for money. Already, the year before, the Marshal had written to one of the authors of this project: "I shall be very well pleased if you begin with three or four millions, provided you use all the diligence that the circumstances may render necessary, and enable me soon to begin our negotiations."

The affair was, however, less advanced than the minister seemed to think; it is not even sure but that the first idea proceeded from some intriguing persons who manœuvred at Paris between the Government and the Churches; they were sometimes useful to the persecuted Protestants, but often succeeded better in compromising than in serving their interests.

The advantages were indeed doubtful; the disadvantages certain. Some individual Protestants had given their consent; but they were soon unanimous in deciding that the thing should not take place.

Rabaut had been one of the first to oppose it. A memorial, also found amongst his papers, has preserved his reasons for us. "It is asserted," said he, "amongst other considerations, that if even his Majesty did not accept it, it could but be honourable and useful to us to have shown ourselves such good citizens and zealous subjects, when we are refused the name and the privileges of such. But it is not enough to set up the bank; it must be supported. Additional funds will be wanted, and then less will be found than at first. The bank will fall to the ground, and the least that then can happen to us is to be laughed at." Thus, according to Rabaut, if the bank should fail, nothing would have been

effected, and millions would be lost; if it should succeed, would it be quite sure of being appreciated by Government? "Do not let us deceive ourselves," pursued he. "The enemies we have to do with will never be bound down by gratitude. If we are at all respected, it is because we are numerous, industrious, and rich: it is not on account of our feelings of loyalty, over which the clergy have cast the darkest cloud possible. Besides, in this case, we should have too evidently the appearance of being generous from interested motives; nor could we even conscientiously affirm that they had nothing to do with it."

The pastor then pointed out of what importance it was for the Protestants not to dispose of their ready money, "the only thing," said he, "of which we are really proprietors, because we are bound down as regards our landed property, not being able to sell an inch of it without permission of the Court. Would it not be tightening our bonds to put into the hands of the State what it has not as yet been able to take from us? The priests would then carry all before them, and their counsels be the better followed, inasmuch as policy would no longer have the fear of emigration to oppose to them. How great might the temptation be to comply with all required of us, from the fear of losing all by resistance? Few would have courage to go away quite empty-handed." After all, the whole thing might be only a trick to induce the clergy to contribute more largely to the wants of the State. A magnificent *free gift* could not fail to make the "smallness of our contribution" apparent; the more so, as the Protestants would only have lent, whilst the clergy gave.

This plan was therefore abandoned, but it was to take up the idea of a free gift, similar to that of the clergy. It was thought that there could be no objection to the latter. Less would be given, but it would be a gift; besides, all might

contribute to it, whereas only the rich could have set up the bank. As to the advantages expected, the Protestants need not be reduced to look for them from doubtful success, or from gratitude still more doubtful. Precautions might be taken. They might make sure of having toleration before paying for it. With this purpose, they would begin by asking for the king's authorization to present him with a free gift. If the authorization were refused, nothing more could be said; if granted, a step was gained. The king would next be asked himself to name the Protestants who should collect the money. Now, this nomination by the king would be an official, though indirect acknowledgment of the existence of the French Protestants; and therefore the overthrow of those laws which were based, as has been seen, upon the hypothesis that they had ceased to exist.

The Government hesitated on account of this very condition, which, by Rabaut's advice, the Protestants, on their side, were determined not to give up. The second project was consequently abandoned like the first.

It was, however, questionable whether they had done right in being firm. To bring the king to accept, under any form, a gift openly announced as coming from the Protestants, was to recognise a position, said some, from which it would have been impossible to dislodge them. How could Government henceforward have sent men to the scaffold or the galleys whose money had been accepted? How maintain laws which refused to them the titles of Protestants and citizens, after once allowing them to come forward as such? Many regretted, therefore, that the affair had fallen to the ground.

Consequently, when it was proposed to offer ships to the king, not a few inclined to embrace this new opportunity which presented itself. Instead of money, they would give a ship. The committee at Paris, of which Gebelin was presi-

dent, had sounded the Court; and the Duke de Choiseul, as we have just seen, had not as yet formed an opinion, or else did not think proper to manifest it. He had no feeling of hatred towards the Protestants; but neither did he like them well enough to risk any portion of his credit on their account.

But the king was not disposed to occupy himself with serious matters.

"It is, as you say, a serious question," resumed he. "We will speak of it another time. I really do not know when we shall have done with these eternal Huguenots. Has that—Calas been condemned?"

"Not yet, Sire."

"It is very tedious."

"Does your Majesty think him guilty?"

"I?—I know nothing about it. That is the business of the judges. And that—Rochette—is he dead?"

"Not yet."

"The edicts are, however, explicit; and I am told that he confessed."

"Is it your Majesty's pleasure that he should die?" said the Marchioness.

"I do not particularly care about it; but the edicts are there—they must be executed."

"Your Majesty has power to moderate their severity," resumed she.

"To pardon one preacher, would be to pardon and encourage them all."

"It must come to that, one time or other," said the comptroller-general.

"Perhaps; but we have still too many people who are opposed to it; and I am too old to allow myself to be stunned with their expostulations."

"A famous prize was very nearly taken lately," said Richelieu.

"I know it," said the king; "the man who brought me a petition last year. He was allowed to escape; and do you know, by whom, Madam?"

She knew very well.

"By whom?" said the Marchioness.

"By Narniers, your friend."

"He rendered us a great service, Sire," said the Duke de Choiseul.

"A service?"

"Yes. The news of the minister's arrest sufficed to agitate the country. If his deliverance had not been known at once, we might suddenly have had half of Languedoc on our hands, and your Majesty is quite aware that the English have their eyes upon that province."

"And now?"

"All is quiet again. Rabaut himself opposed all plans of rebellion."

"Very good; but, nevertheless, Narniers took upon himself extraordinary powers. Scold him well for it, Marchioness."

"What a commission, Sire!"

"Well, when I see him"—

"Your Majesty will see him immediately. He is one of our"—

"Oh! indeed! Good evening, Duke—good evening, M. Bertin. Try and agree, try and agree. Do *you* get money for me, and *you* lose as little for me as you can; and may God save France! Go."

"Yes," muttered Bertin, as he went away, "yes; may God save France!—he is right; for if it is not God who saves it, it will certainly not be he."

"What do you say?" said Choiseul.

"Oh! nothing, nothing. What urgent occupation has the king this evening?"

"A play, I believe."

The financier pulled his hat over his eyes, and held his portfolio tight under his arm. As he came through the gallery, grumbling—

"My lord!"

"My lord!" cried twenty eager petitioners, who were waiting to catch him as he passed—for one of the privileges of the comptroller-general was to have as many people constantly at his heels as all the other ministers put together. Pensions, which were granted indiscriminately, were never regularly paid. "I have granted you a pension of a thousand crowns," said Louis XV. himself to one of the officers of his household, but do not increase your expenses, for it will never be paid you." Like the nobleman who said to one of his friends, "What do you give your valet?"—"A hundred crowns."—"I give two hundred to mine—it is true that I never pay him."

It was a small matter to obtain a pension; the great thing was to have it paid. Even the king's word was neither guarantee nor assurance. In this same year, 1761, we find him subscribing for two hundred copies of an edition of Corneille, with notes, the proceeds of which were to be the marriage portion of a descendant of the great tragedian. Voltaire appreciated highly the honour of having the king's name at the head of his subscribers; but as for the money, we see from his letters, he by no means reckoned upon it.

Pensions were thus in arrears for three months, six months, whole years. Thence that general mendicity of which the comptroller was the troubled centre. At his entrance upon office, whatever his rank might be, the princes of the blood sent to compliment him, and this singular homage paid

to money, had been repeated five or six times during the last ten years; the Duchess of Orleans, indeed, when sending to M. de Silhouette, the day after his appointment, had desired the question to be asked, if he was still in office. But the more advances made, the more those who made them thought they had a right to exact. Thence all those endless recriminations, of which the comptroller-general was the object, obliged as he was to choose amongst the claimants, and continually to cause quite as much discontent as satisfaction.

But that evening, Bertin was too much out of sorts himself to wish to satisfy any one. He did not even look at the petitioners; he pushed aside roughly all the petitions. He knew that he had only enough in his coffers to provide for what was most urgent. Nor on his return to his hotel, did he find anything of the little he had left there; receipts for ready money had carried almost all off. These were drafts signed by the king's hand, and the treasury was obliged to pay them immediately, whatever might be the state of the finances. We need scarcely say that this ready money was generally reserved for illegal favours and disgraceful payments.

Such was the state of France in 1761.

Is it improved? Are we improved?—for the question will apply, not to France only, but to the present generation as a whole—are we better than the eighteenth century?

Let those answer who can, and those decide who dare. Sources of corruption have been closed up; sources of corruption have been opened out. Many things have changed their names, but the things themselves remain. Pensions were then solicited, without any right to them; situations are now given without any merit having deserved them. Ministers are less run after, but it is because people are more regularly paid. Less money is asked of them, because they have something better

to bestow. What was given, then? Some crowns. Now, a railroad is given, on which, in a few moments, you may gain a hundred thousand. The corruption which came down from the throne did not extend beyond a certain sphere: in our day, what house, what heart, is secure from that which springs up on all points of the soil? Out of the circle of the great moneyed men, no one, or almost no one, at that time, thought of making rapid fortunes. Opportunities, it is true, were wanting; but, after all, supposing opportunities and temptations to be wanting, primitive simplicity still existed on all these points. A fortune to make, was a tree to plant and allow to grow up, under God's favour and that of the seasons. The tree was taken care of; it was not lost sight of, its smallest growth was measured gladly. But no one thought of hastening it otherwise than by care, labour, and patience.* The father had planted, the sons watered; and both father and sons thought it quite natural that the first-fruits should be for the grandsons.

Is that the case with us? Does not our severity towards the eighteenth century proceed, in some measure, from the fact, that the evil was then in high places, which is now everywhere?

To return to our story.

The actors were waiting in an adjoining room. They were, besides those whom Madame de Pompadour had named at her toilet, the Countess d'Estrades, the Duke de Coigny, the Marquises de Narniers and de Courtenvaux. There was to be no audience but the king.

To while away time, they had begun to talk of the piece. They said what they thought of it; and those who were obliged to study it could not think much of it.

* From 1740 to '45, there were only seventeen bankruptcies in Paris, about four a year.

"What a character!" said the Duke of Orleans. "What a heap of"—

"Your Grace," said the Count d'Entraigues, "will not have a Thibault every day."

Thibault, in the *Partie de Chasse de Henri IV.*, was his favourite character. He had brought it out—created it, as the phrase is—on the little theatre at his villa at Bagnolet.

"This Count d'Anplace is the most insignificant, the most stupid"—

"Do you complain? I should be glad, for my part, to have only to be insignificant. That d'Olban, with his sentences, his speeches, his pompous phrases, his unsociableness"—

"A bad comment upon the Misanthrope"—

"And on the fury of Orestes. Just see how he makes me begin—

> 'Enfin, grâces au ciel, contre la race humaine
> Le sort a pleinement justifié ma haine.
> Qu'on vienne maintenant'"—

"Yes, yes; a second edition of the great lines—

> 'Je suis content, et mon sort est rempli!'"*

"An edition revised and"—

"Spoiled."

"And *vulgarized*, like everything else in these times."

"Poor Protestants!" said the Marquis de Narniers. "So much bad prose written against them, such bad poetry in their favour!"

"One would forgive the bad poetry," said the Marquis d'Entraigues, "if the plot had any common sense in it. Here we have two intimate friends—two old, very old friends, and yet it is the first time that Cecilia confesses to Amelia her very old attachment to a certain individual"—

* Racine's *Andromache*, Act V. Scene 5.

"To me," said Marigny, bridling up.

"Oh! the coxcomb! Look at him! He is beloved, that is enough. His part pleases him."

"You are jealous, d'Olban. But go on; let us see if you have remarked all the beauties of this masterpiece."

"Well. André, the favoured lover, is at the galleys; but his faithful mistress knows nothing about it. Where was she, what was she doing, when he was sent there, a victim to his sacrifice for his father? Nobody knows. The most curious part of the story is, that no one at Toulon, not even the officer at the head of the bagnio, knows why André is there. He persists in not telling it; the secret of his devotedness is to die with him. But Cecilia arrives at Toulon. She has accompanied her friend thither, who comes for the purpose of marrying you, Marigny; and who, at the very moment of saying yes, says no, because an old uncle, on whose fortune you reckoned, persists in not dying. Then I, d'Olban, arrive from America, to marry Cecilia, who cannot endure me, who declares she will remain faithful to André, which has not prevented her marrying, meanwhile, an old Crœsus, who, happily, has died, leaving her all his fortune. As for me, a lawsuit that I have just lost has put me into awfully bad humour, and Cecilia's refusal puts me quite out of my mind.

"In the midst of all this, André, who does not recognise Cecilia, begins to ask her for news of his home and his father. He has rejected the offers of the Count, who is both able and willing to serve him; and addresses himself to a stranger, whom he perceives by chance on the quay. Why? I do not know, nor does the author either, doubtless. Be that as it may, after some questions, they recognise each other, and—do not embrace each other, because Cecilia cannot but believe that her lover is at the galleys for some crime. Does he even undeceive her? No. His discretion returns; he will not tell

that he is innocent, that he has sacrificed himself for his father, even at the risk of seeing her die of sorrow and shame.

"Then at last comes in old Lisimon in person—for the story must have an end one time or other. He tells his story, and that of André, to whoever will listen to him. All is cleared up. André is proclaimed to be the most virtuous of men. The king is to be entreated to grant him his pardon; he is allowed, which is not quite legally correct, to act as if he had already obtained it. He marries Cecilia. Amelia, portioned by Cecilia, marries the Count d'Anplace—and there I, d'Olban, remain looking at them. But they are very kind hearted. They gravely propose to me, in order to console me, and I suppose likewise for the pleasure of saying one more absurdity, to go and live with them—and that is all. Observe that there are five acts, and that the principal, the real subject, does not occupy one-half."

"Very good!" said the Duke of Orleans; "dissected by the hand of a master. I thought I was listening to Fréron."

"Thank you."

"What! do you too consider the name an insult?

"It is the fashion to think so."

"The fashion! I did not know you were its slave so far as that. Fréron, my dear Marquis, is a man who has the courage to say what he thinks."

"And what he does not think."

"Rarely."

"*Rarely!* The word is a convenient one. 'You tell falsehoods, sir. No, *rarely*.'"

"Fréron has not told as many lies of all our authors put together, as M. de Voltaire has of Fréron alone."

"Possibly."

"Have you seen the last number of the *Année Littéraire?*"*

* Fréron's Journal.

"Did you say *l'Année* or *l'Ane?*"*

"*L'Année.*"

"I do not read it."

"The loss is yours. You would see there that the ass, if ass there be, can give some good kicks now and then."

"Because the lion is old."

"Not too old to bite; and besides, he was not old when Fréron began to attack him."

At this period of the conversation, the king came in.

* "L'Ane Littéraire," a pamphlet against Fréron.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Good evening, gentlemen," said Louis XV. "Good evening, Countess.—Well, are we ready?"

They bowed.

"By the way, M. de Narniers," resumed he, "it has generally been believed that there is but one king in France."

"Sire."

"Certain people, it is said, have thought even that too much."

"Sire."

"I think it is enough. I am told that you are of a different opinion."

"I thought I could not serve you better, Sire, than by making reparation for the treachery of which one of your lieutenants had been guilty."

"Very good, very good; but do not do it a second time. Besides, cunning is not treachery."

"Sire, M. d'Ambly has condemned himself."

"Unhappy man!" cried the king—for all idea of sudden death, suicide, apoplexy, assassination, laid painful hold of his imagination. He did not like to feel himself so near to God, to eternity, to hell.

"Let us begin," resumed he.

He sat down. One-half of the room, which was unoccupied, represented the stage. There were neither costumes nor scenery.

They began. André, the convict, walks alone on the shore.

"Le lever du soleil, en ce brillant lointain,
Ne m'a jamais semblé si beau que ce matin.
La mer paraît tranquille, et le ciel sans nuage
Promet aux matelots un jour exempt d'orage.
Pour moi seul sur la terre il n'est plus de beaux jours.
Que sert le calme, hélas! quand on a fait naufrage?
J'ai tout perdu; l'espoir m'est ravi pour toujours,
Dieu, qui vois mes tourments, tu sais si j'en murmure.
Signe honteux du crime et son vil châtiment,
Cette chaîne est bien chère à mon cœur innocent.
J'aime à sentir son poids," &c.

These lines, intended to be simple, but which are quite the reverse, were repeated by Marigny with a truth and simplicity which were almost touching. He excelled in putting nature in the stead of art, truth instead of affectation.

The Duke of Orleans, who succeeded him on the stage, likewise made laudable efforts to be more simple and natural than the absurd character he acted. But it was a strange part to play for a prince of the blood, to declaim against nobility and the nobles in presence of the King of France. Boileau had ventured to do it before Louis XIV.; but what was then only a witty sally without importance, had assumed a more aggressive form with the new ideas. We are astonished in our day, to see what great lords, a hundred years ago, could listen to without displeasure.

That liberality, it is true, was in fact only one of the many forms under which their insensibility was manifested. The most obstinate sinners are those who are the least displeased at the freedom of the pulpit. Such was the case at that time, as regarded the freedom of philosophy. It was applauded precisely because people thought themselves quite sure never to have to listen to it seriously. Inequality seemed too firmly established in the laws and manners of the country, to admit of their seeing any danger in allowing equality to be spoken of, or in speaking of it themselves.

Thus it was with an expression of perfect conviction that the Duke of Orleans repeated these lines—

"O chère amante!——
En vain nous nous aimons——
Oncle injuste! Oui, c'est lui, son préjugé barbare,
Qui seul, tant qu'il vivra, nous retient, nous sépare—
Elle n'est pas noble, elle, Amélie! O blasphème!
La noblesse n'est rien, ou c'est la vertu même—
Je gémis quand j'entends ainsi déraisonner,
Quand je vois la sottise, et tout le monde y tombe,
De consulter les morts, de fouiller dans leur tombe
Pour savoir si l'on doit estimer les vivants.
Quoi! l'on me soutiendra que je me mésallie
En épousant les mœurs, la vertu, la beauté?
Non! L'orgueil n'inventa la vaine qualité
Que pour y suppléer et la mettre à leur place."

This was the language in fashion at Court as well as in town, at the very time that, in the army, no man, if not a noble, could as yet aim higher than the rank of sergeant.

It was now the Marchioness's turn. She recited poetry, as she sang, with real talent. Her only fault was being no longer young; but it was only the more to be admired that she managed so well as to retain the appearance of youth. The most simple and innocent characters suited her admirably; she only felt the weight of advancing years by the efforts she was obliged to make not to appear to feel it. This obligation to remain for ever young cost her some secret distress. "I must die a Montespan," she seemed to say; "for with a king like this, there will be no Maintenon."

On this occasion, it is true, she did not so much require to be youthful. Fenouillot's *Cecilia* is a very grave, sententious personage, one of Diderot's saints, in short—and such women are of no particular age. She went to work courageously, therefore, poor woman! at the risk of stumbling by the way over some of those aphorisms with which she herself strewed it. "Of all feelings," said she, "for instance,

"'L'amour est le plus beau, quand la vertu l'épure,'"

which was, as we see, very edifying in the mouth of the king's mistress, and in presence of that king now old and sated with pleasure.

But who was going to pause at the ideas expressed? They must in that case have paused likewise at the picture which she drew of the sufferings of the Protestants, which would have been going rather too far. No one dreamt of such a thing; none, save the Marquis de Narniers, once thought of saying to themselves, that these were realities in the case of a million of French subjects. This levity was of ancient date. When Louis XIV., at the height of his severities against the Protestants, went to St. Cyr to weep over the story of the misfortunes of the Jews under a sanguinary minister and a mistaken prince, no voice arose to say either in his own heart, or in his ear, that he was that king, and that the oppressed subjects were his. And how can we wonder that the allusion escaped him, when the poet himself, either did not feel it, or else, was eager to deny it? It was the very year of the Revocation, that Racine called Louis XIV. "the wisest and most perfect of men." It was nearly at the same period that the good-natured La Fontaine congratulated him publicly on having reduced "heresy to its last gasp." Let us no longer ask why kings had no ears; let us rather ask why those about them had no hearts.

The piece went on in spite of all these inconsistencies. The Misanthrope, d'Olban, had here and there excited a laugh; but all passed off without too much difficulty, and the work on the whole left no other feeling than that of real *ennui*. Richelieu, for his part, thought it awfully long. His distress increased; he longed for and yet dreaded the moment when it would be his turn to appear before this very small but formidable audience.

"You seem quite agitated, Richelieu," the king whispered to him.

"Ah! Sire, I do not tremble in this way before your enemies."

"Well answered; but the reply is not your own."

"Neither, thank God! is the nonsense mine that I am going to have the honour of declaiming before your Majesty. I shudder beforehand."

"Bah!—but hush! Listen—the Marchioness is going to faint." That scene was indeed at hand.

ANDRE.

. . . . . .

"Pauvres et retirés, parce que nous suivons
Une religion qu'on a proscrite en France—

CECILE.

"Quoi! vous étiez de ceux qui, d'une autre croyance—
Ah! je renais—
Sans doute qu'il va me donner quelque lumière.
Dis-moi, tu connaissais Lisimon?

ANDRE.

"C'est mon père,
Madame—

CECILE.

"C'est ton père! Ah! malheureux André!

ANDRE.

"Ciel! quel nom m'a frappé? Que vois-je? Est-ce bien elle?

AMELIE.

"Elle est sans connaissance!—Holà! Frontin! Fernelle!
Accourez!"

They hastened forward; and Madame de Pompadour, supported by Amelia, did her best to faint.

But all at once, masters and servants stopped short. The Cardinal de la Roche-Aymon, the grand-almoner, had just appeared at the door of the room. The king turned pale.

The Cardinal, who was visibly affected, advanced towards him.

"Sire," said he, "God's decrees are inscrutable. A heavy blow is about to fall, or perhaps has already fallen upon your house. The Duke of Burgundy, your eldest grandson"—

"Well?" cried the king.

"— is dying."

The child had had a fall some time before, having been thrown down by one of his playmates, and received a wound on the head, which had been neglected, and had just been declared mortal.

That same night he died. The Duke of Berry, his brother, became heir to the throne. The Duke of Berry was Louis XVI.

What would this child have been had he lived? A Louis XIV. or a Louis XV.? Would he have stemmed the torrent, or have been carried away by it, like Louis XVI.? God only knows! Had he lived, he might, perhaps, have prevented the French Revolution, at least such as we have seen it, and the Republic, the Empire, and all that has proceeded and still proceeds from both.

In the great lessons of Providence, the insignificance of the means employed is often more striking than the immensity of the result. Two children are at play; one throws down the other, and the face of things throughout the world is changed.

Meanwhile the Revolution was beginning to sound the first note of its triumphs. The flood was about to pass over one of the most powerful bulwarks opposed by the ancient system of society to the encroachments of the modern. The Jesuits heard their death-knell sounding.

We remarked in our first volume, that it is their fate to be always guilty, and yet always punished unjustly. We left them about to appeal to the Parliament of Paris against the

sentence by which the order had been condemned to pay the debts of one of its members, Father Lavalette, who had first made a fortune in the West India trade, and had subsequently been ruined by it.

The law was on their side. Civilly considered, no common bond of mutual responsibility had ever existed, or did now exist, between their several houses. Each of these establishments had, like those of the other orders, its own property and administration; each had been licensed in France by special letters-patent, and by that very fact had received from the French kings a distinct individuality. The superintendence that the General exercised over all the property of the order did not manifestly suffice in law to constitute this property a single estate, or the whole order one individual.

Considered in a moral point of view, of course it was quite another question. The whole order would have been benefited by Father Lavalette's gains; the whole order ought therefore to bear his losses. Setting aside all considerations of conscience or honour, prudence, we should think, ought to have bound them to it. However, the more serious their error, the more we ought to reflect before formally accusing them of it. In the presence of danger so manifest, we cannot admit that men so able would have hesitated at a cost of some hundred thousand francs, to extricate themselves. Their obstinacy, therefore, only proved their confidence in their right; and when, after being condemned by the Tribunal of Commerce, they ventured to have recourse to that Parliament of Paris which they knew to be almost unanimous against them, it was a solemn, we had almost said a chivalrous, appeal to the generosity of their adversaries.

This appeal was not heard. The Parliament did not comprehend, that by being just in the first instance, it would have the better right to be severe afterwards. Passions had risen

so high that all calculation, even from interested motives, seemed to be time lost. Consequently sentence was given on the 8th of May 1761, to this effect :—"That the General, and in his person the body and Society of the Jesuits, be condemned to defray, as well the principal as the interest and costs of all protested bills; in default of which, the said General and the Society shall be held as sureties and responsible for," &c.

But so early as April the 17th, the Parliament had taken the first step in the new course, from which it was henceforward impossible to recede. Even before giving sentence in the civil trial, it had laid the foundations of the religious and political one. Orders had been given to the provincial Father to deposit at the registry of the Parliament a copy of the Constitutions of the Jesuits; and three councillors, with Chauvelin at their head, were named to examine them.

In his first report Chauvelin reviewed them rapidly. He sketched the outline, in general terms, of the plan of that fearful unity. It was questionable, here and there, whether he admired or criticized. Evidently he put a restraint upon himself in not paying open homage to the genius of Loyola.

We must confess that, notwithstanding the ease of the style, this work is wholly deficient in greatness and philosophy. The state, the king, the safety of the state, the king's rights, this is all that the ardent abbé—and that sometimes with puerile solemnity—can see to be in danger from the Jesuits; it is to this point that he brings the whole question.

Is it indeed the real question? We have already shown that it is not. The rights of governments are something—the safety of states is a great deal; but the rights of man, that is, of conscience and reason, are much more—they are the important matter, they are all in all. It is with these rights that Jesuitism must, above all, be shown to be at variance.

It is only too easy to prove that they are distorted or annihilated by all the laws it has itself adopted or enjoined.

The same observation may be made upon the second report of the Abbé Chauvelin, the one in which he treats of the morality of the Jesuits. The accusations, in detail, are numerous, warm, sometimes bold, often not to be refuted; it is Pascal in parliamentary style—Pascal, but with more erudition, and sometimes with almost as much wit. But in that heap of far-fetched crimes brought forward by the author, the real crime, the crime of every day and every moment, the fundamental crime of the Jesuits, that to which the wisest and most virtuous as well as the most intriguing and absurd among them contribute, namely—the weakening of moral principle—the annihilation of free-will, and all really great motives of action, that crime is scarcely touched upon.

This defect, it is true, had rather promoted than injured the success of the report. Had Chauvelin gone deeper in his views, had he manifested more Christian indignation at an antichristian code of morality, he would have been less understood in a century so superficial, and in which there was so little Christianity. His revelations required to have the attraction of scandal; his statement to be suited to take its place with the last novel on the toilets of women of fashion. This species of success had not failed him; from one end of France to the other nothing was talked of but him and his memorial; from one end of France to the other—for is it not always the case in France that the very persons who are flattered the most, are a little laughed at?—these lines were repeated, which had been found one morning on the walls of the Palais de Justice—

> "Fragile thy lot! perverse Society, we know;
> A cripple founded what a hunchback would o'erthrow!"

To overthrow it, was, then, the object which was beginning

to be avowed. That which the boldest had at first conceived in secret, the most timid began to speak of boldly. From that moment, it was no longer the cause of the Jesuits alone. Royalty was cited with them to the bar of the Parliament.

It was from the crown, indeed, that the Society had received the sanction to exist in France. The Parliaments, as courts of justice, had incontestably jurisdiction over individuals. That of Paris had power, in a civil trial, to condemn the Society as a body, and the sentence, though wrong, was still legal. But to dissolve the order, was to undo what kings had made; it was usurping the king's place.

Louis XV. had felt this. He had even shown on this occasion one of his rare impulses of energy and dignity. In spite of the Duke de Choiseul, in spite of Madame de Pompadour, he had sent orders to the Parliament, on the 10th of August, to suspend for a year the inquiry just commenced.

The Parliament, encouraged by the Duke de Choiseul, at first refused to register this edict; but afterwards registered it evasively. "Shall be suspended for a year," said the decree, "to make any enactment in reference to the said institution *by decrees other than those in regard to which the oaths of the Court, its attachment to our sovereign lord the king, and its respect for public tranquillity, do not allow of using delay or adjournment.*" There was more than encroachment in this; it was almost ironical. But the *will* of the king never was enforced two days together. He said no more, and the Parliament remained free to act.

Then, by solemn decree, the attorney-general was "declared appellant as against abuse of power, in the case of all the bulls, briefs, and apostolical letters, concerning the priests and scholars of the Society, calling itself the Society of Jesus."

Thus while pretending to obey the king, they fell back upon the Pope. The question, instead of becoming more circumscribed, was thus enlarged. It was no longer the state against the Church, but the Church against herself, that the Parliament pretended to have the mission of protecting.

From whom had it received that mission? Not from the Crown, seeing that the king ordered them to suspend the inquiry; still less from the Church, seeing that the bishops and the Pope, the legal organs of the Church, were notoriously on the Jesuits' side. Had it even received that mission from conscience and reason? The Parliament must then have commenced by breaking with the Church. If a Protestant, on his own private authority, attacks and condemns the Jesuits, he is consistent with himself and his principles; but that a Romanist—for the question is still the same in the present day as in 1761—that a Papist, we say, while remaining Papist, should consider himself justified in blaming what thirty Popes have applauded, overthrowing what the body of bishops unanimously support, now as then, against all, and in the face of all, is one of the strangest contradictions to which the human mind has ever been brought. Hence—for all inconsistent positions lead to violence and falsehood—so much injustice in a cause where it was possible to be severe without ceasing to be just—hence so much calumny against an order which, if less calumniated, and if attacked in the name of great principles, would have been more certainly overthrown.

Meanwhile a commission appointed by the king was also examining, on its side, the constitutions of the Jesuits. It is said that Louis XV. had hoped the conclusions would be in their favour. For an instant he believed them to be so, for they were confined to demanding some modifications in the

statutes, particularly in what related to the authority exercised by the General throughout the kingdom. But the whole order was unanimous in refusing all changes.

"*Sint ut sunt, aut non sint,*" the General had said long before; "*sint ut sunt, aut non sint,*" repeated all who had taken Loyola's oaths, from China to Rome, from Rome to the deserts of America. Their motive of action, which was considered as obstinacy by some, and by others a noble firmness, was perhaps neither so elevated nor so low as has been believed. It was plain good sense. They saw that the animosity against them was too tenacious to admit of their hoping to extricate themselves by a few concessions; besides, in a body so closely bound together, there can be no slight concessions, no more than, in an arched roof, any stones can be removed without danger.

Finally, upon the advice of the commissioners, the king had consulted the clergy, and on the 30th of November, fifty-one prelates had assembled at Paris. Although the result of their deliberations was not as yet known, there was no doubt but that their decision would be in favour of the Jesuits. It was known beforehand that five or six in all would demand the modification of the statutes, which did indeed happen, and that one only, M. de Fitz-James, Bishop of Soissons, would vote for the suppression of the order.

But the very day after the bishops had assembled to absolve, another voice arose to condemn the order. It was at Rennes. It was there that the man whom we have heard saying to Chauvelin, nearly eighteen months before, "When shall we begin?" sat as attorney-general of the Parliament of Brittany. Chauvelin had begun: his friend followed in his steps. La Chalotais had succeeded in gaining over those who distrusted Chauvelin's violence. These two names were henceforth inseparable in the admiration of the public, and

the hatred of those whom they had attacked. But then, instead of preserving that silence, which, in the midst of so many attacks, invested them with the dignity of misfortune, the Jesuits broke it on the 19th of December, by a manifest which could but contribute to their ruin.

In answer to four questions which the king had addressed to the bishops respecting them, they declared :—That they fully recognised the temporal independence of kings, the inviolability of their persons, the indissoluble nature of the oaths that bind subjects to sovereigns; that they would teach, in private as well as in public, the four Gallican articles of 1682; that they allowed to the bishops the same jurisdiction over them as over all the other orders; lastly, that if the General were to enforce upon them anything contrary to these declarations, they would refuse to obey.

Their enemies had here, in a few words, what they could have most wished for to make use of against them : perjury and falsehood. We say perjury, for it was evident that to suppose occasions on which they would not obey, was to declare a vow of obedience so positive as theirs, a false oath. We add falsehood, and this was still more evident. What they here promised to teach, was the reverse of what they had always been seen to believe, of what they had taught, not always, it is true, but wherever they could. The Jesuits were not and could not be sincere, in pretending to submit to the decisions of 1682—the source of perpetual grief to the Popes. It is to be observed, likewise, that they did not promise to admit, but only to teach them—a subterfuge which did not come in amiss to the support of the accusation against them, on the points of mental reservation and compromise with heaven.

This publication was destined to mark the beginning of their defeat. Very soon afterwards, they could see the effects

of it. It deprived them, among people of the world, of their most respectable friends; it wounded, in the Church, all who were sincerely and openly ultramontane. They could be represented, without calumny now, as ready to betray all, when their interest should require it.

Such, then, at the close of 1761, was the state of the great question at issue. The hand of God, hidden beneath the injustice of man, lay heavily upon the Jesuits. Conscience and reason, which they had trodden under foot, were rising up against them, imbittered, perverted, ready to stain themselves with the very perfidy with which they reproached the Society, in order to bring it down. The magistracy, blinded by party spirit, gained popularity at their expense; the king saw the danger, was afraid for a moment, and then fell asleep again.

The real object of all this was to be sought neither in the legal statements of one party, nor in the replies of the other. Like the cat in the fable, the Parliament drew the chestnuts out of the fire,* but more powerful persons were the gainers. The Encyclopædia quietly looked on, and laughed. Let the Jesuits fall beneath the blows of the Jansenists; the Jansenists afterwards will fall under blows enough. Such was the wish and hope, and henceforward the certainty of all the enemies of religion. From the very commencement of the struggle, Voltaire writes that he should like to see all the Jansenists thrown into the sea, "each with a Jesuit about his neck." As the quarrel grows warmer, he comes back upon this charitable wish; he embellishes it with poetical varieties. Diderot had spoken of strangling the last king with the intestines of the last priest. Voltaire is jealous of this coarse idea, and borrows it. "Could not a modest and

* See La Fontaine's Fable of the Monkey and the Cat. Book ix. Fab. 17.

obliging proposal," he writes to Helvetius,* "to strangle the last of the Jesuits with the intestines of the last of the Jansenists, bring things to a settlement?" Elsewhere,† "I should die content," says he, "if I saw the Jansenists and Molinists destroying each other." And elsewhere again,‡ "Never was a more favourable time for cultivating the Lord's vineyard. Our enemies are destroying each other. It is for us to fire upon these wild beasts, while they are biting each other, and we can take aim at our ease." D'Alembert is less picturesque; he is only coarse, as he was wherever he could venture to be so. "The Parliament," he writes to Voltaire,§ "is engaged in deadly strife with the Jesuits, and Paris is more occupied with this than with the war in Germany. As for me, who like neither the fanatics of the Parliament, nor the fanatics of St. Ignatius, all I wish them is, that they may destroy one another. Philosophy is perhaps on the eve of being avenged of the Jesuits. Let us hope that the destruction of the Jesuitical *canaille* will draw after it the destruction of the Jansenist, and the intolerant *canaille* likewise."

But the intolerant *canaille* had yet to make its last efforts. Let us return to Toulouse, where it was specially at work. The Parliaments had to compensate to God and to the Pope for their evil doings against the soldiers of the Church.

We left Rabaut at Pont-de-Montvert, at Reboul's house. When the search had ceased, and the sentinels were removed, he went away. He was once more at Toulouse, where he continued to direct, unseen, all the efforts tried on behalf of the pastor Rochette, the brothers Grenier, and the Calas family. His *Calumny Confounded*, which was just printed, was not yet in circulation.

* May 11, 1761.
† Letter to the Countess of Lutzelbourg, December 28, 1759.
‡ January 26, 1762. § September 8, 1761.

"Will you believe me?" said his friend M. de la Salle, who kept him acquainted day by day with what passed at the Parliament. "Do not distribute that writing. The more I read it, the more I think that it must be kept for calmer times."

"The plea after the condemnation?"

"The condemnation is not yet pronounced."

"It is going to be pronounced."

"I fear so; still, all hope is not yet lost. If your writing is made public, condemnation is almost certain."

"Have you found one single word in it at which those gentlemen could reasonably be offended?"

"No; not reasonably—but what does that signify? They will only be the more irritated. What will offend them in the memorial is not this or that passage—it is the whole, from the first to the last word. Arguments shock sometimes more than abuse. What can be more healing than oil? yet only try to throw it upon the fire."

"And you think they are come to that?"

"I no longer *think* it; I am sure of it. If you had only heard them to-day! Never did passion in some, and weakness in others, show themselves more scandalously. M. de Bonrepos,* as it seems, would consider himself dishonoured, ruined, if he did not obtain the blood he is asking for. These two trials have become his business; the object of his life. He no longer thinks; he will not think. He goes headlong to the charge, like the soldier who need not trouble himself whether the war be just or unjust."

"I see pretty well, after that, that you have not transmitted my request to him."

"You are mistaken."

"Well?"

* The attorney-general.

"He grants it."

"Why did not you tell me?"

"I hoped you would say no more about it."

"Why?"

"Believe me. Do not go to that prison."

"Do you distrust him?"

"No; he is violent, but upright."

"Well then"—

"You might be recognised by some subordinate, who would think he was doing right in arresting you."

"If I only went where I was sure of not being arrested, where should I go?"

"So, you will go, then?"

"Yes. It shall not be said that my brethren reckoned upon me in vain, to prepare them for death."

"Well, go. Here is the note which will procure your admission—the name is left blank—put what you please, not *Tuabar*, however, for everybody begins to know it. As to your pamphlet, what do you decide upon?"

"Nothing as yet. I shall see what our prisoners think of it."

CHAPTER XV.

It was the first of January 1762.

How solemn a day is that on which a year begins! solemn for him who hopes to see the end of the year; but far more so for him who knows that he shall not see it!

The three brothers, and the minister, who were expecting their sentence from day to day, knew—they could doubt it no longer—that the latter was their case. If they were surprised at anything, it was at being still alive, for, from the rate at which their trial had proceeded at first, they had not imagined that they should be made to taste death so long in the formalities attendant upon it.

For some weeks past they had been allowed to see each other. Every day they passed some hours together. They had made for themselves a world within those walls, in which peace, friendship, and faith, now reigned uninterruptedly. They had so entirely committed their cause to God, as to have almost forgotten that their fate depended likewise on men.

That day they had obtained permission to be together since the morning. They had embraced in silence, and shed in secret the tears which they had concealed from each other. The first day of the last year of their lives! and the eldest of them was not thirty years of age! Their comforter, Rochette, was not twenty-six!

Towards noon, however, they recovered their usual spirits. They had seated themselves, almost cheerfully, round their

humble table, where some dishes appeared sent in from without their prison. Unknown friends had thought of the dinner of the prisoners.

"Quite a feast," said the minister.

"I almost expected it," added one of the brothers. "This is a season when friends are remembered."

"Yes," said the eldest; "those whose services are needed; as for us, from whom nothing is expected"—

"Nothing is expected from us, brother?"

"What would you have expected, my child?"

"A noble death!"

"Right, brother, right! you will not be the one to disappoint the expectation."

It was thus that the thought, to which they were so well accustomed, came back under every possible form. The same resignation was modified in them, according to the difference of their characters. The eldest was a serious man, naturally depressed, almost as much the stoic as the Christian. The youngest, on the contrary, had that happy light-heartedness which is compatible with the deepest feeling and most serious thought. He was about twenty, but always seemed either younger or older than the expression of his countenance; younger, from his tone of voice, which was that of a child, and older, from his firmness, which was that of a man inured to trial, and of a Christian whose strength is in God.

Lastly, with the other brother, both philosophy and faith, more thoroughly blended, formed a character more regularly Christian. It was neither the unmoved nature of the one, nor the youthful ardour of the other. He neither braved nor despised trial; he accepted it. He was particularly happy in the society of the minister, whose state of mind was congenial to his own. Besides, they were of the same age, and had known each other from childhood. The similarity of

their fate appeared to them an invitation from heaven to a still closer union of spirit.

What conformity of character had done for them, diversity of character had done for the other two. The eldest and youngest, of whom it might have been thought that they never could live together, were never apart. The one seemed weary of the vivacity of the other, and the latter felt a degree of constraint from the gravity of the former; but each felt the need of having his own deficiencies supplied by his friend, and of blending their two minds into one, while each retained his own individuality.

They were now all four seated at table, and for the first time they had been left alone. They had often solicited it, but in vain. A jailer had been present at all their interviews.

"Alone!" said Jean de Lourmade,* when he observed this favour. "Ah! gentlemen, people are beginning to do as we please. It would seem that we are indeed in bad case."

"Alone!" said Jean de Sarradou; "and with knives too! the jailer pretended that it was never done."

"It is to me that you owe that," said the minister. "I asked him if we looked like people who would commit suicide, and he understood that the precaution was perfectly needless as regarded us."

"These people," resumed one of the brothers, "ought, one would think, themselves to be astonished at the confidence they have in us. And I might say the same thing of the judges that I do of the jailers. Have you observed the tone in which they speak to us? It is almost respectful. It seems to me, that if I had to try people suffering for their religion,

* The youngest. They had, according to the custom of the country, three different names. The name of the eldest was Grenier, sieur de Commel; the name of the second was Grenier, sieur de Sarradou.

and that these people excited such feelings in me, in spite of myself, I could hardly detest their faith."

"That, on the contrary," said Rochette, "is the very thing that they cannot forgive us, because it is an argument which is unanswerable. In vain they oppress us; they have not degraded us. Our people remain superior to their people."

"And our clergy to their clergy," interrupted de Commel.

"Yes, thank God!" resumed the minister. "The Reformation appeared as a light—it has been such."

"And will still be one," said the brothers.

"And happy, my friends, happy those who shall have held up that light steadfastly on high."

"As we shall hold it up on the scaffold."

"God grant it!"

They changed the conversation.

"Father Bourges has not come for two days," said the minister.

Father Bourges was the appointed converter of the Protestant prisoners.

"We saw him yesterday," said de Commel.

"I never saw him more embarrassed than the day before yesterday," resumed Rochette.

"It is on that account, probably, that he leaves you alone."

"Did he hope to succeed better with you?"

"If he did," said Jean de Lourmade, "he might have seen that he was mistaken."

"Come, Jean," said the eldest, "relate your dispute to us."

"You were present, brother."

"I know; but M. Rochette was not."

The grave elder brother was delighted to show how the witty younger one had come off with a heavy Dominican.

"We are listening," said Rochette.

"On one condition," resumed Jean. "After my dispute, we must have yours."

"We shall see. Begin."

"The dear man arrived, then, with his protuberant"—

"Jean," said the eldest, severely, "if you begin to jest, I shall go away."

"How, my poor brother? The door is double locked. Ah! if I had but to jest to send you far, far away!" He sighed. "But to return," resumed he. "Father Bourges came yesterday as usual, mild in words, inexorable as to dogmas. 'Well, my child,' said he, 'are you going to end as you began this year, in which God has offered you so many means of grace? I should not have thought that on St. Silvester's day' "—

"'What day is St. Silvester's day, sir?' said I. Observe, that I knew very well.

"'St. Silvester's day, my child, is the 31st of December, the festival of a great saint—of a Pope.'

"'All the Popes are saints.'

"'We never said that.'

"'Do you not call them all *Your Holiness?*'

"'A title—a form.'

"'Yes, but infallibility?'

"'Infallibility, my child, is quite another thing. From the moment that this privilege was attached to the see of Rome, it was necessary that all'—

"'It was necessary, indeed, that the system might not fall to pieces. But when an Alexander VI.'—

"'There it is!—always Alexander VI.'

"'You well know that it is not from the impossibility of naming others.'

"'No, unfortunately. But why always the worst? Do you see anything like it in the present day? The present Pope, Clement XIII.'—

"'Is better—agreed; but he might be worse, though that would be difficult, and yet still be Pope, and you still be obliged to believe—to profess that the Holy Spirit spoke by his mouth.'

"'Of what use is it to suppose?'

"'You do not wish me to make suppositions. Let me state facts, then, and do not prevent me from naming Alexander VI. Whether there may have been ten popes as bad as he, or only one, or a hundred; whether there may be similar popes in future, or not, what does it matter? You are neither more nor less obliged to maintain that God has spoken and might speak again by the mouth of abominable men.'

"'*His ways are not our ways*, says the Scripture. He has done many other things that we should be tempted to consider as improbable and immoral'—

"'Doubtless; but before we consider those things good which seem bad to us, we have a right to be sure that they proceed from him. It is not merely a right, it is a duty; for it would be impiety to lay upon him all that ambition or ignorance may have attributed to him. Thus,' I added, 'choose, sir; either allow us to speak of the bad popes, and of the monstrous improbability of a system according to which they are necessarily as infallible as the best, or let us go to the bottom of the question, and see whether the best have really been more infallible than the others.'

"'*Tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram*'—

"'There it is! I may say too, as you did just now, speaking of Alexander VI.'

"'*Tu es Petrus*'—

"'Oh! if you please, let us set aside words. These are, I know, calculated to produce a great effect upon those who only know as much of the Scriptures as you are pleased to

tell them; but with us, you are aware, who know them by heart'—

"'You have the book; you have not the light which alone enables us to read it.'

"'And what is that light?'

"'Tradition.'

"'Stop a moment. In this question it is precisely to tradition that I am going to appeal.'

"'I should be curious'—

"'To tradition—yes, sir; to the oldest, be it understood, and to the surest.'

"'Which is—?'

"'The Scriptures themselves. It is to them, to the history of the thirty or thirty-five first years of the Church that it is natural, one would think, to have recourse for an explanation of these words. Well, then, will you allow me, without going beyond that period, to ask you two or three very simple questions?'

"Father Bourges is no friend to simple questions; he has a wonderful talent for complicating them, in general. I took my measures, therefore, and was determined to make him answer *yes* or *no*.

"'Do so, my son,' said he, 'do so.'

"'You quote words,' resumed I; 'it is upon words that I shall question you first. Could you point out to me, in the New Testament, one passage where St. Peter is called the head of the Church?'

"'What does it signify, provided he was such?'

"'That is another question; we shall come to it. I told you beforehand that I should begin by words. Are those of *head of the Church*, I repeat, used in speaking of St. Peter?'

"'No,' said he.

"'And *head of the Apostles?*' pursued I.

"'No,' repeated he.

"'Well, sir, from those two questions to which you have just answered *no*, I draw a third. Can we reasonably suppose that the book of Acts, the Epistles—in a word, that all the New Testament, would not once have given St. Peter a title that belonged to him? And whilst you cannot write a page, a line about his pretended successor, without being obliged to bring forward his character of head of the Church, a whole volume has been written without this title once coming under the pen of its authors!'

"'We do not know,' he objected, 'whether we have all that the apostles have written.'

"'Possibly,' I resumed; 'but come now, in your own mind and conscience, can you believe that what we do possess is so short as that they may not have been able, supposing St. Peter to be head of the Church, ever to give him that name? that St. Paul should have written to *the Romans*, and that at great length, without even naming him? that the same St. Paul should have addressed advice and directions of all kinds to so many churches, without telling them a word of any tie whatever, established, or to be established, between them and St. Peter, or the successors of St Peter? No, sir, no! Before God, laying your hand upon your conscience, you will not say *yes*.'

"His embarrassment was visible. I may even say, with perfect truth, that I never met with a Romanist bold enough to face the question thus stated. The more they have maintained to you that there must be a head, that there is one, that there always has been one—the more difficult it will be to explain why the famous *Tu es Petrus* has never re-appeared in the writings of the apostles."

"You might have added," said the minister, "that the *Tu es Petrus* itself is only to be read in one of the Gospels. If

these words had, in the eyes of the apostles, the importance since attached to them, how can we explain their omission by three out of the four historians of Jesus Christ?"

"That is, indeed, striking," said Jean de Lourmade. "I never observed that, and I think it has escaped our controversialists. What a pity I did not know that yesterday! But—bah! what should I have gained by it? Those people are so completely proof against all evidence, that there is nothing more to be gained by ten arguments than by one.

"Meanwhile, he answered me nothing, or almost nothing, for I took care only to bring forward facts, and those unanswerable ones. I confused him with questions, short and direct, from which it was impossible to turn aside. 'Do you remember,' said I, for instance, 'a case in which one apostle was reproved by another?'

"'Yes,' said he.

"'And the apostle reproved was —?'

"'Was—St. Peter.'

"'Very good. And at what period, if you please?'

"'I do not remember exactly.'

"'The date is in the Epistle to the Galatians. It was fourteen years—fourteen years, sir—after St. Paul's first journey to Jerusalem—that is to say, at a period when Christians and churches were beginning to be seen everywhere, and when the primacy of St. Peter had had a thousand opportunities of being exercised, even in spite of himself: it was then that St. Paul says he had "withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed." Does he even excuse himself for having withstood the head of the Church? No: neither there nor elsewhere is there one word, one syllable which indicates that St. Paul regarded himself, or was regarded as inferior to St. Peter.' I insisted still longer," pursued Jean de Lourmade, "on this negative side of our arguments against Rome. The

more improbabilities I enumerated, the more came into my mind. I never have understood how a conscientious man did not feel himself crushed by the silence of the Epistles upon the prerogatives of St. Peter, by the complete independence of the other apostles in regard to him—in short, by the absence of all appeal, and even all allusion to any visible head whatever.

"The Father at last interrupted me every moment—'But tradition, but tradition,' said he, as they all say. 'Tradition!' I replied. 'But, once again, here it is! here is that of the first thirty years of the Church; here it is, written, authentic, unchangeable; and the best proof that it is not on your side is, this eagerness to turn from it continually, to I know not what other tradition, which begins no one knows when.'

"'It begins from the apostles,' said he.

"I saw clearly, by these words, even if I had not known it before, how thick a bandage has been put upon the eyes of our adversaries by their hopeless position. What happened to me with poor Father Bourges, happens to us every day with the generality of Romanists. They would not venture to tell you that St. Paul had spoken of the Pope; they give up explaining to you how he can have written, either to the faithful at Rome, or from Rome itself to other believers, without mentioning any head whatever, without naming St. Peter otherwise than in two or three narratives; they will allow, in short (for it is allowing it), that thousands of pastors have been established, thousands of churches founded, before a head, a centre, was spoken of; and yet they will begin again to cite to you, as coming straight from those very apostles, the very traditions of which they have acknowledged that the apostolic times offer no traces.

"He returned to the point so candidly, that I could not help laughing. 'I see plainly,' said I, 'that I am labouring

to fill a bag that is full of holes. I have proved to you twenty difficulties, twenty impossibilities. You allow the greater part of them, and yet you continue, the moment after, as if I had said nothing, as if you had allowed nothing. I should have much more to say to you, but of what use would it be? I should have asked you, in particular, where you go for the twenty-five years that your tradition assigns to the episcopate of St. Peter?'

"'We do not vouch for the five-and-twenty years,' said Father Bourges.

"'Vouch for four or five of them,' resumed I, 'and still I defy you to prove it. You will not find three, nor even two, against which there is nothing to be said.' I set about producing to him, following step by step the chronology of the Acts, all the dates I could find in contradiction to the idea of the residence of St. Peter at Rome. He wished to stop me at some of them, which are not quite certain, according to him, and which cannot, indeed, be positively fixed. 'But,' said I, 'if all our dates were inexact, you would not have gained a step by it. At the very utmost, you may come, by separating them a little more, to find a year or two during which St. Peter may possibly have travelled into Italy; it still remains to be proved how this journey should have left no trace in what St. Paul writes to the Romans, or in what he writes from Rome to other churches. But let us stop,' pursued I; 'it is clear that we should never come to a conclusion.'

"'Let us stop, since you wish it,' said he. 'So long as God shall not have opened your eyes'—

"'May He open them,' said I, 'if they are closed; but the objections I have just made to you, sir, are mere arithmetic. In presence of such arguments, he who needs to be enlightened, is, I think, the one who resists, and not the one who uses them.'

"He left me.—It is your turn now, pastor."

"Our discussion," said Rochette, "turned upon a similar subject. For a long time past he had fallen back incessantly upon the objection, that I had no right to call myself a minister, and that the apostolic succession, preserved in his Church, was the only source of all spiritual power. I had resolved, if he returned to it, to take the offensive side of the argument. I intended making him confess how very far the assumed rights of the Church of Rome, even taking them up on his own ground, are from being as clear as she supposes.

"The day before yesterday, I saw him arrive laden with books.

"'Are those books for me?' said I.

"'*For* you? No; against you.'

"'Is the Bible among them?'

"'No.'

"'Ah!' resumed I, laughing, 'that is a *no* which I accept as a good omen. The Bible is *for* me.'

"'Who told you so?'

"'You—since you have not brought it. But let us see—what are they about?'

"'The priesthood—so outrageously perverted in your Church'—

"'Sir,' said I, 'spare me this language. It would ill become you to use those exaggerated expressions that you employ in the pulpit to render us odious or ridiculous, to a man about to die for having been a minister, and having confessed it.'

"'Well,' said he, 'let us be calm, it is my wish. Here is, in the first instance'—

"'Stop,' said I. 'You know that I never consent to quit my ground—the Scriptures—unless I am forced to it; forced, of course, by sufficient reasons. I do not know what you are

going to tell me or quote to me; but I do not need to know. Answer me first'—

"'Why first?' said he.

"'Because our objections, drawn from Scripture, have necessarily precedence over your arguments, drawn from tradition or from the Fathers.'

"He closed his book. It was, I think, St. Ambrose.

"'Nothing can be more completely *one*,' resumed I; 'nothing can be more firmly bound together than your hierarchy. One supreme head, the source of all power; under him, bishops who exist by him alone; under the bishops, priests, who exist by the bishops alone. From the Pope to the village priest, from the village priest to the Pope, the line is straight, visible, palpable.

"'Well, the clearer the system apparently, the more striking are the obscurities which it is found to contain, on a near inspection. The straighter the chain, and the more tightly drawn, the better can be seen where links are wanting.

"'In the first place, let me ask you whether you are Gallican or Ultramontane?'

"'What does it signify?' said he sharply. 'We all recognise the supreme authority of the Holy See; that is enough.'

"'Yes; but how do you recognise it? I well know that the two parties avoid going deeply into this point: they know that they could not do it without raising the most dangerous quarrels. All, you say, acknowledge the authority of the Holy See; but, I repeat, how? To the Ultramontanist, the Pope is the necessary and indispensable head of the hierarchy and the Church: not only does all proceed from him, but can proceed from him alone. To the Gallican, on the contrary, if he is now and in reality the head of the Church, he is not so indispensably. It is the Church herself that has

created him prince of priests; it is she who, for the sake of order, has made him the supreme dispenser of the powers of which she alone is the source. In a word, according as you are either Ultramontane or Gallican, the Pope, with you, will be Pope by divine right, or only by human and ecclesiastical right. Once more, which are you?'

"It was all in vain; he would not commit himself. His distinctions, his buts, his ifs, were enough to excite the envy of a Jesuit.

"'Well,' resumed I, 'since you will not allow me to know which of the two you are, allow me to attack both.

"'The Gallican is evidently more consistent with history. Whatever opinion may be held as to the mutual relations subsisting between the Bishop of Rome and those of the other Churches, in the fourth and fifth centuries, it is incontestable that the latter did not admit what has been since called the *papal institution*. You see them elected, now by the people, now by the clergy, elsewhere by the clergy and people unitedly; everywhere, in short, ordained and installed by other bishops; but you cannot even try to show me any trace whatever of the necessity of a commission sent from Rome to the latter, in order to empower them to do this. Observe that I have referred to a period when Rome was beginning to be the centre of the Church. If these traces are wanting in the fourth and fifth centuries, what will it be in the third and second? What would have been the astonishment of the faithful of those times, if any one had presumed to tell them that their pastors were false pastors, because their powers did not emanate from the Bishop of Rome!

"'This is, however, the system that the Ultramontanist is obliged to support; for if there has existed anywhere a single generation of legitimate pastors, though not instituted by St. Peter or his successors, the chain is broken, and their legiti-

macy can exist independently of the Pope. I say one generation, one single generation. Now, count, if you dare, count how many there have been in the four or five centuries of which I speak. Or, if you choose to be Ultramontane, deny it! Blot out all these centuries. Say that St. Paul was a usurper, a schismatic, when he established so many pastors, so many *bishops*, to speak as you do, on his own authority,—and then, only then, you can maintain that the Roman priesthood is a complete and logical whole.

"'Although more rational in a historical point of view, the Gallican ideas are still farther removed from forming, on this question, a system of some solidity or some value.

"'In the first place, and this is no small matter, their system is directly opposed to that which the Popes have always professed. At Rome, you know that there is no opinion less acceptable than that which makes the papacy an office instituted by the Church, accountable to the Church, consequently inferior to the Church. The Popes have never been satisfied to be acknowledged in reality as the heads of the Christian world; they have never failed, when they had courage and opportunity, to condemn those who did not grant that they possessed a divine right, an original and necessary supremacy. The Gallican who anathematizes us is therefore not less at variance with the Pope on this point than with us.

"'We might even say that he differs from him more; for in fact, from the moment that you give up supporting the present system as bearing date from the early days of the Church, in what do you differ from us? It is only a question of discipline. You prefer one form, and we another, that is all. But between you and the Pope, between the Gallican and the Ultramontane, there is more. It is in the name of God himself, it is as a doctrine, that the Pope teaches his supremacy;

it is therefore, in his sight, a doctrine that you deny. You treat *us* with the greatest severity, who only differ from you in ecclesiastical matters; and you know that you are yourselves condemned by your spiritual head, on what is a point of faith with him! In whose name, then, do you come and tell us that we have perverted (that is your expression) the Christian priesthood? In the name of the Pope? Begin, then, by agreeing with him; for, according to him, you likewise pervert it. In the name of the Church? But he is its only official and legitimate organ. Besides, the Church has never formally pronounced a decision upon these questions. All that related to the priesthood, to the papacy, considered as the source of spiritual power, to its connexion with the episcopacy, to the origin of the present system, was, after lengthened debates, carefully eluded in the decrees of the Council of Trent.'

"Such is the summary," pursued Rochette, "of my reply to Father Bourges. If I have not repeated to you all the objections he tried to make to me, it is because he did not overturn—how could he?—a single one of the facts that I brought forward. These facts subsisting, what becomes of the subtleties by which our opponents would endeavour to evade the consequences deducible from them? Set all this aside, Father Bourges is, however, an upright man. He is not Ultramontane, for he did not maintain the absolute rights of the popes; he is not Gallican, for he appeared pleased with what I said of the inconsistencies and difficulties of Gallicanism. What is he? He is, I believe, what the generality of sincere priests are,—uncertain, wavering, scandalized at the pretensions of Rome, alarmed, on the other hand, at the illogical and false position into which every Romanist throws himself who is not completely subject to her; they close their eyes, they divert their minds, they endeavour to persuade

themselves, by attacking us, that they are still the friends and champions of the Pope."

Rochette had proceeded thus far, when the jailer entered.

"Well, gentlemen," said he, "I hope you will not complain to-day; I think you have been left alone long enough."

"Thank you," said the prisoners. "It has been indeed a good day."

"It is not ended yet," resumed the man.

"We hope so."

"What if it were to end still better than it began? If one of your friends"—

"Who?" said they. "It is not the day for visits."

"Permission from a high quarter."

"Some converter, then?"

"He would rather require one for himself."

"Who told you so?"

"His looks."

"Indeed! His name is—?"

"M. Théo, merchant."

"Théo," said Rochette; "Théo—an old friend indeed. He will—be—welcome."

Rochette appeared calm, and yet his voice trembled.

"Théo," said he, as the jailer went out, "Théo, my friends, do you not know that it is one of *his* surnames? It is he—himself"—

Rabaut entered, accompanied by a young man. The door closed upon them. Rochette threw himself into his arms. They remained long standing, shedding tears over each other. The three brothers and the young man were silent spectators of this long and mute embrace.

"It is you!" whispered Rochette at last. "You—you here! Something told me—how could I believe it?—told

me—that I should not die without having embraced you. Thank you—thank you."

"My son, my poor son!" said Rabaut. "It is you in prison, and perhaps soon to die. And something seemed to tell me, too, that I should see you again in this world. And I, at least, more fortunate than you, could ask to see you—could come to you—and I am here. Yes—I am here. You had no need of me to teach you to be faithful. It is I—I—who needed to see you, to learn of you to be faithful—to teach it to *him*."

As he said these words, disengaging himself from the embrace of the prisoner, he seized the hand of the young man, who had remained near the door weeping.

"My son," said he, addressing him, "you wished yourself to accompany me; you wished to see him—here he is, then. You are about to enter upon the warfare; he is about to leave it, by martyrdom. He is only five or six years older than you, and he was one of our best labourers. You arrive as he is departing. May his blood, my son, be a baptism of courage and faith for you!"

The young man wished to throw himself on his knees before Rochette, but the latter prevented him. He embraced the son as he had embraced the father.

"How much grown you are, St. Etienne!" said he. "Grown in stature; grown also—for we have often heard you spoken of—in faith and in knowledge. You were but a child; you are now a man. Yes, there can be no void in the ranks of Christ's army. One falls; another fills his place. Your father said so, and he is right. But why should he give me as an example, who has himself been mine! What have I done that he has not done a thousand times? I am going to die; but the real sacrifice is not in that. To die once is much easier than to be exposed to death for twenty years, every day and

every hour. If God support me to the last, I shall certainly be more calm on the way to death than I have often been in my journeys and my escapes."

Thus did Rochette express himself with that coolness which is the highest degree of true courage. It was with simplicity and sincerity that he described martyrdom as an easy thing, and declared that he felt too much was said of his sacrifice.

"But enough has been said of me," resumed he. "Am I the only one here threatened with death? Here, dear brother, are those three friends, who may perhaps follow or precede me to the scaffold. Though martyrs for our faith, yet they are going to be, at the same time, victims of a mistake or a falsehood. I am to be condemned as a minister, and such I am; they are to be condemned as rebels, and such they have not been."

Rabaut drew near to the three brothers. He spoke to them as he only could speak.

"Courage!" said he, "courage! God has not called you to this trial without having laid up for you, in the treasures of His mercy, all the strength you need. Ask it of Him, my brethren, and He will bestow it. No—you have already asked, and already received."

He then related all he had done on their behalf. He did not conceal from them his fears; he left them under no delusion as to the probable issue of the trial. But while he took from them the hopes of life, he strengthened their detachment from the world, and revived in their hearts the desire after the joys of heaven. From time to time, the conversation was interrupted by prayer. The whole interview was, as it were, a hymn of praise to that God for whose cause they were about to die.

"Why," said Rochette, "should we not sing one of our

psalms? Let us sing, my friends; we are as well here as in a church."

"Yes," said Rabaut; "next to the singing beneath the vault of heaven, there is no place more suitable for it than a prison, for those who are there on account of their faith. Let us sing—but can you venture? we shall certainly be heard."

"They are accustomed to it."

"And allow it?"

"They cannot do otherwise, unless they were to stop our mouths."

"Let us sing, then!"

With a voice which betrayed his emotion, he himself raised the hundred and sixteenth psalm:—

"My soul with grateful thoughts of love
Entirely is possest,
Because the Lord vouchsafed to hear
The voice of my request.
Since He has now His ear inclined,
I never will despair;
But still, in all the straits of life,
To Him address my pray'r."

All the other voices joined his at the same instant, and hearts were joined to voices, and it was from the very depths of those hearts that, instead of asking God for temporal deliverance, they thanked Him for a far higher deliverance. Why should they have entreated Him to pluck them from the hand of death, seeing He had already, as St. Paul says, taken from death its sting, and from the grave its victory?

"When troubles seized my aching heart,
And anguish rack'd my breast;
. . . . . .
On God's almighty name I call'd
And thus to Him I pray'd—
Lord, I beseech Thee, save my soul,
With sorrows quite dismay'd.
. . . . . .

"Then, free from pensive cares, my soul,
Resume thy wonted rest;
For God has wondrously to thee
His bounteous love exprest."

But all at once they stopped. They had heard already, between the verses, something like an echo. Now the sounds were prolonged. The melody reached them feebly and confusedly, but yet it was distinguishable. When they were silent, and the high-vaulted roof no longer sent back the echo of their own words, they seemed still to reach them, but as if from beneath their feet.

The Calas family was below them. They had heard and answered; and all these spirits blended together, through walls and ceiling, in one aspiration towards God.

CHAPTER XVI.

The day was on the decline. A January sun shed its last pale rays through the barred windows.

"My friends," said Rabaut, "we must part. I hope I shall see you again. I was told that I might return; and yet"—his voice trembled, and betrayed his rising tears.

"Gentlemen," said the jailer, returning, "another visitor, who will give you less pleasure, perhaps, but"—

"I wager it is Father Bourges," said Jean.

"No, not he, but some one sent by him."

"Then it is all one. Is he a priest?"

"A priest."

"Let him come in. In fact," added Lourmade, laughing—for his careless gaiety, poor youth, never failed him—"he does not need our permission."

"Birds of prey catch the scent of death," said the eldest.

"They may very likely find life in us yet. The other has been beaten; he sends fresh troops."

"Hush!"

The priest came in. He was rather tall, thin, with a high forehead, small eyes, his head slightly leaning to the left side—one of those persons who seem as desirous to appear insignificant as others to be imposing. However, had the twilight permitted, it might have been easy to guess that this attitude was not habitual to him. The man accustomed rather to rule than to be humble, to threaten than to be polite, would at

once have been recognised. He was, however, very polite, as he approached the prisoners. Hat in hand, he bowed with irreproachable grace.

"A Jesuit!" murmured Jean.

"Gentlemen," said he, "do not be surprised."

Rabaut recognised the man by the voice. It was the Satan of his Judas—the tempter of old Major d'Ambly—the man of the red-hot tongs.

"Do not be surprised," said Father Charnay, "that I have perhaps inconsiderately taken this opportunity of visiting you. Father Bourges, my friend, has the sole charge of your consciences; besides, he has no need of me."

He told a lie. It was the Father himself who had begged him to come to his assistance with these unhappy hardened men, as he called them. The Jesuit had weighed all the honour that might accrue to him from their conversion; but as it was not very probable, he would not appear to have undertaken it on his own responsibility.

"Father Bourges," resumed he, "has spoken of you to me with the most affectionate interest. You showed, he said, a courage, a perseverance, worthy of a better cause. This is what I chiefly wished to see, dear brethren, and—but you are not alone?"

He had just observed Rabaut and his son. It will be remembered that he did not know him by sight.

"M. Théo, a merchant—one of our friends—and his son," said Rochette, hastily.

"One of your friends, and of the same religion, doubtless," said the Jesuit.

"Yes, sir," said Rabaut.

The anxiety was great. The Jesuit appeared sincere in his surprise; but that was no reason for believing him to be really surprised. He might have known of Rabaut's pre-

sence there; he might have people ready to seize the minister at his orders, behind the door.

Rabaut was, as ever, the calmest person there. "If he knows of my being here," thought he, "his measures are taken, and it is useless to try to escape from him. If he knows nothing of it, he does not know me personally. Only, I must not appear as if I wished to flee."

He offered him a chair. Charnay sat down, not without a profound bow.

"Gentlemen," said he, "may I ask which of you is M. Rochette?"

Rochette bowed.

"You are a good reasoner, sir, I am told," continued the Jesuit.

"Did Father Bourges observe that?" asked Jean.

"He spoke to me of you also, sir," resumed Charnay, addressing himself to the young man.

"Of me?"

"Of you. I have already perceived the animation—the wit—that he ascribed to you."

"I am, indeed, quite confounded."

"Ah! my child, it was not to praise your talent—talent has lost more souls than it has saved. Blessed are the simple."

"Blessed Father Bourges!"

Charnay smiled, for whilst he condemned talent, he piqued himself on possessing more than his brother priest. But he immediately resumed his gravity.

"Yes," pursued he; "blessed are the simple-minded; blessed are those who do not dispute. It is written, that 'God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.' Fear, then, to contend against God."

"God means you and your friends, does it not?"

"It is the Church, my young friend, the Church, His beloved daughter, of whom I am myself but the very humble child, and very unworthy minister."

He bent his head with downcast eyes, and hands crossed upon his breast.

"A great deal of humility at the service of great pride," said Jean.

"The Church uses her rights," resumed he, a little disconcerted; "there is no pride in assuming privileges, when they have been received from God. Infallibility"—

"Sir," interrupted Rabaut, "my friends have perhaps not a week to live. Have you nothing better than these theological theses to offer them, even supposing them to be correct?"

"Let him alone, let him alone," said Rochette. "*Martyr* means *witness*. Why should we not bear witness to our faith, even to the end? If these gentlemen are absolutely determined that the martyrdom shall be complete"—

"Ah! why do you speak of martyrdom?" exclaimed Charnay, soothingly. "We who would give every drop of our blood, that you would consent to live."

We have already seen that life was always offered to the ministers on condition of abjuring. The same proposal had been made to the three brothers.

"Better take us at once to death," resumed the minister, "than offer us life at a price to which you know we will not consent. We have said so often enough to Father Bourges, from the very beginning; we have even added, if we must tell all, that the proposal appeared to us somewhat immoral. To put people to death on account of their faith, is only cruelty or folly; but to place them between their conscience and the scaffold—to offer, as the reward of a lie, the most attractive of earthly possessions, life!—to urge unfortunate

beings to ruin themselves before God, and dishonour themselves before men—this is more cruel, more infamous than any dungeon or suffering! I speak now," added Rochette, "of the thing and not of the men. I know that there are many among you who believe they are only charitable in offering us life on condition of our abjuring. But that which absolves them in this case, is on the other hand one of the most serious reproaches that can be cast upon your Church. It is she who has taught them to consider salvation as attached to the external profession of her worship and her dogmas; it is she who, without clearly teaching it, has yet by all her laws, her forms, and her tendencies, put together, generalized the opinion that the essential point is to belong to her, that the very worst of her children is nearer salvation than the most pious of heretics. Hence, it little matters how one may have come to her or returned to her. Whether the conversion has been spontaneous and sincere, or whether a mean love of life has been its only motive—it is quite the same; you have been again admitted into favour before the Church and before God. In this way, the end will always justify the means. Confiscation, fines, vexations of all kinds, imprisonment, the galleys, sufferings, all will be lawful to bring within the pale of the Church those who would choose to remain without."

"We must make distinctions—we must make distinctions," said Charnay.

"Jesuit—Jesuit," repeated Jean de Lourmade to himself.

"We must make distinctions," repeated Charnay. "The Church has nothing to do with the scaffold or the galleys. She has a horror of shedding blood. *Abhorret à sanguine.* Spiritual weapons are the only ones that she can or will use."

"So," said Jean, "when we go to the galleys"—

"Whose is the edict that sends you there?"

"When our ministers are put to death"—

"Who pronounces the sentence?"

"Very good. After that, to attribute to you the horrors of the Inquisition would be pure calumny. The Inquisition, even in Spain, has not shed a drop of blood; no, it only makes people over to certain officers of the Crown, knowing very well, it is true, that they will be burned; but that word is not in the sentence. Condemn to death!—for shame!—the Church, such a tender mother!"

But though this was said in raillery, Jean had risen from his seat. Irony did not satisfy him. Indignation burst forth.

"And do you dare," cried he, "to say that to our faces? Do you not feel that it would be enough to give us, if we had it not already, both disgust and horror towards your Church? What! because the edicts of Louis XIV. were not signed by priests, it is not the Church that bears the responsibility of them! Because priests do not sit here in the Parliament, it will not be the Church who sends us to death! Where, then, have our kings taken the monstrous doctrine which makes them sovereigns over souls as well as bodies? Who has boasted to them of that unity which you make your idol? Who has charged them to maintain it, though it be with fire and sword? Who has praised and blessed them for whatever cruelties they have invented against the enemies of this sanguinary chimera? Who has perpetually represented to them that the oppression of heretics is the surest means of pleasing God, of atoning for their crimes or their sins? Whence do cries of indignation arise in France, as soon as Government appears willing to let us breathe? And you would wash your hands of all these atrocities! and you would have it sufficient to 'make distinctions'

in order that all this blood that has been shed should not be laid to your charge! 'The king!—the edicts!—the parliaments!' The king is but the arm; but you—you are the head!"

The Jesuit had frequently tried, but in vain, to interrupt him. Lourmade, standing erect, and with a glance of fire, overawed him by his looks and gestures.

What could he have answered? The vehemence of the language did not take from the truth of the facts.

But the Jesuit's strange "Let us make distinctions," had been, nevertheless, in the mouth of every one interested in exculpating the Church and the clergy for a long time past. We meet with it again, long afterwards, even down to the memorial in which Malesherbes came to the conclusion of emancipating the Protestants. "The bishops of Languedoc," says he, "demanded, in 1752, the rigorous execution of the laws of Louis XIV. It could not be in their character of bishops that they made this demand. The bishops are ministers of peace. When they advise punishment, they consider themselves as laymen consulted by the king." A great consolation, assuredly, to the victims of their sanguinary councils! But that which Malesherbes evidently wrote only as a figure of oratory, that he might not have to stigmatize too severely the rigour for the cessation of which he pleaded, others said, and still say, with incredible assurance. It is in substantial volumes that people have ventured in our day to tell the sons of martyrs, that their fathers were not put to death by the Church. The endeavour has been made gravely and learnedly to prove that the Inquisition did not condemn to death.

But as Jean de Lourmade was continuing with increasing ardour to overturn this abominable sophism—

"Enough—be calm," said his eldest brother at last. "Do you think that this gentleman requires to be convinced? Do

you know Father Charnay?" said he, addressing himself to Charnay.

"Father—Charnay?" said the Jesuit.

"Yes; the Inspector of missions."

"Well?"

"Well, go and ask him if it is not he who sends us to the galleys, and if he believes himself to be anything but a zealous agent of your Church in sending us there."

Charnay breathed freely, glad that he had not announced his name, for he imagined himself equally unknown to all the witnesses of this scene. Even more than Rabaut, he now longed to be outside those walls.

"Gentlemen," said he, "I confess that I did not expect attacks of this kind. I came—from pure charity. I intended to speak to you—in the name of the Church, it is true; but her rights do not depend upon the greater or lesser severity which man may have used in enforcing them. We are poor sinners. We might be even greater sinners than we are, and yet the Church would still be the Church—heir of the promises—pillar of the truth, as St. Paul says—the mother of us all, and of you, too, who reject her. What! would God have sent His Son to bring truth into the world, and this treasure have been left at the mercy of human imagination? The work of God abandoned by God Himself! Reflect upon it, dear friends. Would you act thus yourselves? Laws! and no magistrates! An infallible book, and no infallible interpreter of it! It might as well not be infallible; or rather, He had better not have given it to us."

"Sir," said Rabaut, "you believe, I suppose, in the holiness of God?"

"What a question!"

"You believe that God made man?"

"Yes, doubtless."

"In His image?"

"In His image. It is the expression of the Bible."

"Well, to proceed. You say it is inadmissible that God, in giving us a law, should not have taken measures for preserving it from all adulteration. Very good; but listen, for I also have an argument to bring forward. God is holy; God created man, and that *in His own image.* He created him, therefore, pure and holy. Who, after that, will admit that He did not at the same time take measures for preserving him pure, holy, and sinless? My argument has the same weight as yours; it has but one defect, which is, that this conclusion is positively contrary to facts—man, the work of God who is good, is himself evil."

"But," said Charnay, "that may be explained. Man is free, unless we make a machine of him."

"Take care," said Rabaut; "I did not say that it was inexplicable; I said that, *à priori*, we should not have imagined to ourselves a holy God as permitting evil. Since, then, He permits it, neither can you suppose that He designed to render error impossible, once a revelation was given."

"Nor do we assume," said the Jesuit, "that the argument *à priori* is of a nature to suffice. Thank God! the Church has received assurances."

"*The Church!* yes—but what Church? Do not, I beseech you, let us play upon words. You know as well as we do, that when the apostles said *the Church*, they spoke of all Christians."

"Because all Christians, at that time, really formed but one."

"There are several now, it is true; and all these assurances, say you, have been inherited by yours alone. But who affirms this? She herself. We find ourselves, at the very outset, in a faulty circle: 'I am infallible.—Why?

Because God has declared it.—Where? In the Scriptures. —But we do not see those declarations there. Never mind; they are there.—And who can vouch for it? I!' This is the point to which all your arguments upon this subject necessarily arrive. 'I am infallible, for I affirm it. I affirm it, because I am infallible.' It is quite useless. Your labour is lost. We want a demonstration prior to yours, independent of the authority to be established. Where can you seek for this demonstration?"

"That is a question," said Charnay, "that I should not have expected from a Protestant. Where shall I seek my first proofs?—why, in the very book where you yourselves seek for all yours."

"With us," said the minister, "it is quite a different thing. The more we appeal to the Bible, the more faithful we are to our principles; with you, all appeal to its authority is the renunciation of yours."

"Have we not always considered it as the first and surest source of faith?"

"As the first, yes; as the surest, no. It is not the Bible, with you, that is the sure guide to true faith; it is the Bible interpreted by the Church. What does a direct appeal to the Scriptures signify with you? Is it not an invitation to examine them? But examination is Protestantism. You must then begin by being Protestants, in order to become Catholics! No, no! authority enforces its right, but does not prove it. Authority is no longer itself when it begins to look for arguments.

"I go further," pursued Rabaut. "I maintain that the very texts on which your Church rests its pretensions to infallibility, after all, count for nothing. The Scriptures abound in declarations quite as explicit in their terms, which you would never think of setting up as positive promises. '*Whatsoever*

ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.' 'God gives the Holy Spirit to *all* who ask for him.' This is clear, much clearer than all that has been brought forward in favour of your Church. The Quaker is quite as much justified, according to these declarations, to believe himself inspired by the Holy Spirit, as the Church, according to others, to declare herself infallible. It is, therefore, as you see, a question that cannot be settled affirmatively by the Scriptures in any one's favour. If I had not a word to answer to all you might advance, to prove to me that the Church *must be* infallible, it would still remain to be examined if she is so; and this examination would have to begin again at every doctrine, at every fraction of a doctrine.

"You always lay down as a principle, that God wills unity. To labour to bring it about, it matters not by what means, is to be a fellow-labourer with God! God wills unity! How can you know that? Nay, open your eyes, and you will much rather be led to think that it is not His will; at least unity such as your Church understands it. What! it is the will, really the will of the Almighty, and at the end of eighteen centuries we are still unable to agree! It is necessary to salvation, and yet He has allowed so many doors to remain open by which we might diverge from it. The best proof, in my opinion, that it has not been His will, and that salvation is not attached to it, is that it does not exist.

"This laid down, can you have a right to force any one to work out his salvation by one means more than by another? You will answer me that there are not two ways, and that if you wish to force us to take yours, it is because it is the only one. Be it so; but here you mix up two things of which one does not necessarily imply the other. The right to teach is not the right to constrain. The apostles incontestably had the first; when did they arrogate to themselves the second?

What mention do the very words make, which you quote to establish the infallibility of your Church, of constraint to be exercised towards those who will not listen to her voice? 'Constrain them to come in,' says the Scripture; but it is evident that at a period when the Church was herself persecuted, these words could only be understood of zeal and persuasion.

"I repeat, then, infallibility, even supposing it to be proved, does not involve the right of constraint. God, who could constrain without violence, and simply by acting upon the soul, does not do so. Wherefore? we know not; but the fact is such nevertheless. He could by a word unite us, and He does not do it. How can we suppose that He has made over to you a power which He himself does not exercise, to you who can only exercise it by tormenting your brethren, and defiling Christianity by the most odious severities?

"Will you now say that these severities prove nothing either for or against; that the authority of the Church is independent of the means, whether good or bad, by which it has been maintained? I answer, that without this severity, authority is but a name. What is it, I ask, in countries where the secular power is not at its service? In France, what could you do against us without the support lent you by the government? What can you do against infidelity, even with this assistance? What heretic have you converted, what infidel have you reduced to silence, by commanding him, in the name of the Church, but without threats or violence, to be silent, or to believe? When have you seen that the priest, if he is not backed by that which enforces obedience to him, is more listened to than our pastors? Persecution, sir, persecution, is the necessary adjunct of the system of Rome. Authority, alone, exists only for those who are willing to submit to it; but in that case, it is liberty. There is no medium;

liberty, or persecution. Do not speak to us, then, of infallibility and authority; either they are vain words or dreadful realities. If there be nothing to support them, people will turn them into ridicule; if there be anything, it is necessarily a scaffold."

But Rabaut had forgotten himself. Lights had been brought in, and Charnay could see the new speaker. His freedom of language, easy gesture—that nameless something which marks the man accustomed to speak—the attention of the others, and of Rochette himself, who had been silent while Rabaut was speaking; all this, in short, had concurred to make the Jesuit think that M. Théo, the merchant, might perhaps be something more. Indeed, for some moments past he had scarcely listened. It might be read in the expression of his eyes, that he was thinking of something else than an answer to give or an error to refute.

Jean de Lourmade had been the first to remark these secret workings of his mind. He had followed their progress on the countenance of the Jesuit; he had caught something like an effort to restrain a sudden discovery at Rabaut's last words. All was over; Charnay had understood that his opponent was a minister. Who could tell—perhaps he had already guessed his name.

He had indeed guessed it; and Rabaut, when too late, was the first to become aware of it. More self-possessed from courage than the Jesuit from dissimulation, he had manifested no signs of agitation; but this supernatural effort had completely worn him out. His tongue, which up to that moment had expressed his thoughts with his usual freedom, seemed suddenly paralysed. He had just seen as it were that scaffold behind his enemy which he himself exhibited as rising up behind all the decrees of Rome. He saw himself taken; taken with his son—two lives lost, two deaths to undergo—

for there was no pity to be expected from a Charnay; and it was more than doubtful whether the attorney-general, who had incurred sufficient risk in allowing him to enter the prison, would incur a still greater by letting him go out of it. Besides, once the thing had got abroad, that magistrate himself would probably not be able to do anything in the matter.

They had understood each other. They looked at one another as if fascinated, without moving. Charnay did not venture to seize upon his prey; Rabaut held in his breath, as if the slightest movement would have inclosed him in the net which he felt to be already thrown over him. The others waited, in speechless alarm, the issue of this fearful duel.

At length, Charnay, half rising, his eyes kindling, frowning darkly, his arm extended towards the minister, cried out, "Rabaut!"

No one moved. But Rabaut, in his turn, raised his hand, and, pointing towards the Jesuit, exclaimed, "Charnay!"

"Charnay!" they all exclaimed.

This explosion of horror restored him to his usual audacity. He rose impetuously. "Yes," cried he; "yes, it is Charnay! you know it now—you shall know it still better. It is Charnay, heretics! Yes, you have guessed right—and I, too. It is my turn, preacher. You outwitted me at Aigues-Mortes; you did the same at Pont-de-Montvert; but you shall not outwit me at Toulouse.—Jailer! help! help!" He rushed towards the door. But Jean was beforehand with him. Armed with one of the knives that were on the table, he had bounded over to the priest, and, seizing him by the arm, said—

"Not one word—not a cry! You have, perhaps, been heard; they may come; invent some excuse—say whatever you please. I have but one word to say to you—if M. Rabaut is taken, you are a dead man!"

"Let me alone," said Charnay; "I want to go out."

"You shall not go out."

"I shall not go out?"

"No; not till he has gone out, and is safe."

"I will not say a word."

"Indeed?"

"I swear."

"Indeed? Which of the Councils is it that says the oaths made to heretics should not be kept? That of Constance, I believe."

"Let us bring this to an end. What do you want of me?"

"I am going to ring the bell; the jailer will come in; you will be seated with us, down there, at the farther end of the room. M. Rabaut and his son will go away—you will see them go; then you shall go yourself—half an hour afterwards, of course. Come, sir."

Charnay, pale with rage, allowed himself to be brought back to the seat he had quitted. Jean had already seized the bell-pull.

"One moment," said Rabaut.

"No," said the prisoner. "Why delay?"

"Why? because I shall not return, my poor child." His voice was quite broken. It was but too evident that, after this adventure, he could not run the risk of coming back to the prison.

"Farewell, then," resumed he; "farewell, my friends; farewell, Rochette. Do not say to me, as our common Master did to His disciples—'If you loved me, you would rejoice, because I go to the Father.' No, my son, no. I do love you enough to be able to rejoice that you are going to our Father. We shall weep for you, but we shall envy your lot. And you, too, farewell, farewell! These walls, these gates will no more prevent my being with you in this world, than the tomb will prevent my being with you, by faith, in

that world where you will have gone before me. Farewell, farewell!" Jean, at a sign from the pastor, had rung; he then came back, and stationed himself beside the priest.

"They are coming," he said to him, in a low voice; "take care—a word, a gesture, a glance, and"—

He showed him the knife. Charnay—one arm stretched out upon the table, and the other hanging at his side, his head bent down, his fists clenched—had not stirred.

The creaking of bolts was heard. The door was half opened—

"Show these gentlemen out," said Jean de Lourmade.

And Rabaut, after a last farewell, slowly went out with his son.

The priest did not stir. The noise of doors opening and shutting was heard. The prisoners remained standing—their eyes fixed, their ears on the stretch. One more door was opened, then heavily shut; it was—they knew the sound—at last that of the street.

"Safe!" cried Jean.

Still the priest did not stir.

"Safe!" repeated the young man, and threw himself into the arms of his eldest brother. Then, with a voice loud and joyous, though it still trembled, he struck up the old Huguenot *Te Deum:*

"'Great God, we praise Thee, and confess
That Thou the only Lord
And everlasting Father art,
By all the earth adored.'"

They had scarcely begun to sing, when the voices from below answered them. The sacred echo followed them from line to line, from syllable to syllable. At the end of the verse, they paused, and immediately the second rose, like a distant murmur, from the depths of the prison.

"'To Thee the angels cry aloud—
To Thee the powers on high,
Both cherubim and seraphim,
Continually do cry.'"

And then the prisoners took it up:

"'O holy, holy, holy Lord,
Whom heavenly hosts obey.'"

A cry of terror stopped them. One of the three, on turning towards the priest, had just observed his face covered with blood. His eyes were closed; the blood streamed from the mouth and nostrils; his dress was already covered with it.

Anger and constraint had brought on apoplexy. The Inquisitor of Languedoc had preceded, at God's tribunal, those whose death he would have delighted to witness.

CHAPTER XVII.

Let us now descend, for a few moments, into the dungeon whence the Calas family had united their voices to those of the four prisoners. Like the latter, they had seen each other freely for some time past. At first, they had been kept apart, and no one had been admitted to see them; subsequently, after numerous interrogatories, when it was proved that nothing could be drawn from them, they were allowed to be together, but under the eye of a jailer.

That day, for the first time—it was, we may remember, the 1st of January 1762—they had been left alone. They were once more together at table, as on the fatal evening of the 13th of October—the father and mother, the son, his friend Lavaysse, and the two daughters, Rose and Anne; he only was wanting whose madness had plunged them all into this abyss. Their first thought, likewise, had been of him.

"He was there," said the father, sitting down; "there before me—I see him yet; he did not raise his eyes; he seemed to keep aloof from all that was passing. Twice I asked him why he did not eat. I had almost, that morning, given him my malediction—he deserved it, unhappy child! but the recollection was a weight upon my mind; I was almost glad to have to show him some mark of interest. 'Don't you eat anything?' I repeated. He did not answer me, and went away."

"Enough—enough," said the mother.

"He went away. 'Where are you going?' said I; but he had already gone out at that door by which he was never to come in again."

"Father," said Pierre Calas—for he saw that his mother suffered dreadfully at this lamentable story, which the old man was never tired of repeating—"when shall we have M. Rabaut's pamphlet?"

"In a few days, I think. M. de la Salle, it appears, persists in saying that it ought not to be published."

"He is wrong."

"Perhaps he is right."

"What kind of judges are those, good God! to whom people are afraid of proving too clearly that they are mistaken!"

"They are our judges, my poor child. We must take them as they are. And you, Lavaysse, what do you say?"

"I say that after my father's and M. Sudre's memorials, if the Parliament is not convinced, nothing will convince it."

"You are right—nothing," said Pierre Calas. "They are masterpieces. It is enough to make one proud of having inspired them."

The truth obliges us to say that it was rather gratitude than good taste which gave rise to this sentiment in our captives. Everything was deteriorated in the century of which we are treating. Truth seemed to take pleasure in assuming a false disguise. All Calas's advocates had paid and were yet to pay their tribute more or less to the taste for grand phrases and grand sentiments. One alone, Rabaut, was an exception. His *Calumny Confounded*, which has been preserved in Gebelin's *Toulousaines*, is a perfect model of calm reasoning and indignation without bombast.

Sudre, the advocate, on the contrary, had adopted, in all its exaggeration, the inflated style of the day. We should laugh, were it not for the subject, at his perpetual apostrophes

to the accused, to the judges, to humanity, truth, nature, to all the abstract gods of a period almost without a God. By the side of arguments, very well deduced, we have such phrases as these, which a schoolboy might be ashamed of:—"In taking your defence," says he to Calas, "I did not consider that I was serving you alone; I considered that I was serving all my fellow-men. Not one of them but must be distressed that the species to which he belongs, should be deemed capable of an act of such extraordinary madness." What does he mean to say? it is not only affected, but false. Even had Calas been acquitted, the murder of a son by his father is unfortunately not a thing unheard of, and the *species* has been often capable of it. Elsewhere: "I have listened to the wise and the upright," says he. "Their knowledge has enlightened me. Their noble thoughts have elevated my own." And all this to say that he has studied all the features of the trial without prejudice. But nothing in this style can come up to a passage in his second memorial—for M. Sudre drew up two. "Whilst I was engaged," says he, "upon this second document, an unknown hand was also occupied in defending these unhappy ones. Generous unknown! With what joy I saw myself eclipsed! *There are, then, men left! From that moment, earth appeared beautified in my sight.*" Upon which, the author of the *Toulousaines*, after quoting this passage, exclaims: "It is you who excite in me a transport of admiration!" Here we have the learned Court flattering the declaimer! and we must confess that his own *Toulousaines* but too often deserve that admiration, the offspring of a perverted taste, which he professes for the barrister at Toulouse.

Even the father and brother of Lavaysse, both barristers, give way to the same kind of declamation in their statement. Towards the middle, whether the father really had lost all

courage to proceed, or whether it appeared to him an excellent idea to try a dramatic effect, his pen falls from his hand. "What do I hear?" he exclaims. "Just heavens! my son has been brought to trial—I have not strength to go on. I sink—arm yourself with courage, my dear son. Complete the defence of an unfortunate brother." "I obey my father," says the son, continuing it. "How I pity you, my beloved brother, to see your cause committed to such feeble hands! Will zeal make up for talent?" And Gebelin exclaims: "How touching is the whole of this scene! how affecting! Who can refuse to weep over such earnest and admirable feeling!"

We might almost suppose we were reading a scene in Diderot's *Fils Naturel*. All feeling, even that which flowed from the purest sources, had become degenerate. The great leaders of the day had so much praised this style,* that it was no longer admissible to write in any other.

Happily the arguments were in themselves too powerful to be crushed under the weight of this heavy pathos.

In his first memorial, Sudre attacked the legal nullities with which the proceedings were encumbered; nullity of the first drawn up statement of facts; nullity of the first report of the faculty; nullity of the monitory letter, and consequently of all the evidence received in virtue of that deed; nullities, in short, of all kinds at the very basis of the inquiry. The advocate proved that the members of Calas's family, even were they manifestly guilty, could not legally be condemned upon such a procedure.

Passing on to the facts themselves, he laid down and resolved all the questions that referred to them thus:—

* "None but Diderot could undertake such things! M. Diderot opens out a new road to genius. M. Diderot has but to continue to write in this style, to become absolute master of the stage," &c.—Grimm on the *Fils Naturel*, March 1757. And yet Grimm had taste, and great taste; but he was speaking of Diderot!

Was it true that Mark Antony Calas had renounced the Protestant religion, and was to have abjured the following day, or in a short time? The author shows that there had neither been proofs nor even indications of it.

Of what nature, then, were the threats that Calas had been heard to make to his son? The author proves that there had not passed one word but what related to the habitual profligacy of the latter.

Notwithstanding the length of the proceedings, and the minuteness of the care apparently bestowed upon them, had all the facts capable of enlightening the conscience of the judges been really studied? The author enumerates nine facts which had not been investigated, and which, so long as they had neither been done away with nor explained, could not agree with the supposition that the Calas family was guilty.

The second and shorter memorial was intended to throw light upon and corroborate the principal points of the first. The author shows at the close, the danger of that blind jurisprudence which allows itself to be led by the passions of the multitude, and puts the sword of the law into any hand indiscriminately.

There were also some good things in the anonymous pamphlet so emphatically applauded by M. Sudre. Public rumour ascribed it to M. de la Salle. It was less a memorial than a series of observations in favour of the Calas family. The author added some further nullities to those which had already been pointed out; he then applied himself to overturning the evidence collected against the accused, by comparing that of the several witnesses. He showed (which it was not difficult to do) how little they were agreed, how very far they were from having unitedly the importance of one well-informed or an eye-witness.

The memorial by the two Lavaysses added but little to the preceding ones. It was especially in favour of the young man whom an unfortunate chance had led to the house of the Calas family on the 13th of October. It was there proved, that even were they guilty, Lavaysse could neither have known of the crime, nor have assisted in the perpetration of it.

Lavaysse himself had published a narrative of the event in a few pages. He had annexed to it the attestations which respectable persons had sent him, both as to his moral character, and as to the different circumstances of his journey to Toulouse. He established by evidence what he had at first declared, namely, that when the Calas family detained him to supper, he was on his way to get horses to set out immediately for his father's house at Caraman.

Finally, a sixth memorial appeared, the author of which was the son, Louis Calas, who had become a Roman Catholic. He stated that he had not been troubled by his family on account of his change of religion; and that, on the other hand, he had never seen in his brother, Mark Antony, any disposition to follow his example.

Such was, with Rabaut's pamphlet, the amount of the written defence. Such were the arguments and facts which the tribunal had to withstand, if it allowed the animosity of an erring multitude to triumph.

But let us return to the accused.

The meal had been gone through sorrowfully, whilst they calculated for the hundredth time the probabilities of condemnation or acquittal. Let us not be astonished that the Calases should be more absorbed with this thought than the prisoners on the other story. A man who, like Rochette, had long offered up his life as a sacrifice, could, without a great effort, put aside these gloomy thoughts; but it is hard to be cour-

ageous in the midst of one's family. Death, which if alone you would take lightly, seizes hold of you, and overwhelms you, in the midst of all the ties of husband, wife, father, mother, and children. The three Greniers were brothers; but they had all the ardour of youth, the carelessness of the French gentleman; and besides, having been accused together, they were at least sure of being condemned or acquitted together. As for the Calases, they had been tried apart; and although it was manifestly absurd, the crime being admitted, to suppose that the father had committed it alone, it was evidently the father that was especially intended to be condemned. Each, consequently, besides his own personal apprehensions, had to tremble for old Calas. It was injustice within injustice. All of them were innocent, and yet had to bestow their pity upon the old man, equally innocent with themselves, but whose ruin was specially determined upon.

Let us add, that they had not been spared those miserable obsessions so stoutly repulsed by the four other prisoners. That which was merely a weariness, and a tiresome way of passing time to the latter, was to this unhappy family a suffering of every day and every hour. The converters hoped to find an easier and surer prey in the two young girls. Promises, insinuations, threats—nothing had been neglected to alienate them from their parents; and though they had been as yet unshaken, attacks of this kind had succeeded too often for the parents not to tremble lest they should succeed with their daughters.

Father Bourges had distinguished himself particularly in this sad crusade. He carried into it an outward show of the most obsequious charity. Perhaps we are even wrong in speaking of outward show only, for nothing authorizes us to suppose that he may not have been sincerely charitable. But he was one of those who venture to do as much from charity,

and even more, than others from fanaticism. Obsessions proceeding from kind motives are often the most wearisome, because we have not that strength to resist them which indignation gives us.

He had, however, found, both in Calas and in his son, men able to cope with him; and he had moreover observed, that the young girls communicated their conversations with him to them. He had therefore been obliged to employ rather better arguments than those which priests in general bestow upon women—such as vague sentiment, startling assertions, facts arranged, not to say falsified. Despite of this, he had more than once allowed himself to be caught in the very fact of exaggeration—still not to use another word, which would perhaps be more correct.

One day, for instance, he had spoken to them in a magnificent style of the succession of the popes. From St. Peter down to Clement XIII., according to him, there had been neither gap nor schism, and the young girls began to admire the long and majestic chain. But the next day they asked him what he made of the anti-popes; of the four-and-twenty schisms, five of which are in one century * alone; of the obscurities that encompass the succession at the outset, &c., all more or less capable of being perhaps explained, but which should at least suffice to spare us those grand pictures by which the simple-minded are dazzled.

Another day, when explaining the constitution of the Church, he took care to say nothing of the transformations it had undergone. There could be no reason left, after listening to him, for thinking otherwise than that the cardinals dated from the days of St. Peter; so that the young girls, without going quite so far as that, seemed very near allowing that the organization of the Church of Rome may be traced

* The eleventh.

in reality up to the primitive Christians. The brother then asked him what he made of the period when the Bishop of Rome was appointed by the faithful of the diocese, when he did not at all interfere in the nomination of others, when the cardinals were only the priests of the principal parishes of the towns, &c.—all things which Father Bourges' successors, too, would willingly be dispensed from remembering.

The sacraments, the *seven* sacraments of the Church, that sacred number so audaciously curtailed by the Reformation, was also one of the great phrases most frequently in his mouth. They asked him, therefore, if he had forgotten that this number had only been decided, and that after much debate, in 1546.

At other times, it was by the Scriptures themselves that he tried to bring the young girls to the ideas which they knew were refuted by Scripture.

"Bishops!" he said, for instance, to them one day, "how could we do without them? Even your Bibles speak of them." And he showed them the word, indeed, in a Protestant version. But this time the young girls had no need of assistance. They showed him the word continually used indiscriminately with that of presbyter, or pastor, in the New Testament. Pierre Calas only asked him if he was not aware that this indiscriminate use of terms is also to be met with in Clemens Romanus, the very same who is made to be one of the successors of St. Peter.

"'And if he will not hear the Church,'" said he to them another day, "'let him be to you as a heathen man and a publican.' It is not I who say it," added he, "it is Christ." "Yes," said they, "but have you forgotten what goes before? The subject is simply a quarrel between two brethren, and the word *church* in this passage applies to believers in general, whom they are desired to take as arbitrators, rather than

have recourse to the judges." What could he answer? What can those answer who still dare pervert this passage from the sense which it evidently bore in the mouth of Christ?—for it is one of the texts most frequently brought forward.

On this ground of the Scriptures, which was familiar to them, the young girls often stopped him, less with detailed objections than by simple appeals to his conscience and good sense. If he succeeded, by a laborious entanglement of passages, in giving them something like a proof of the doctrine of purgatory,—"You do not seriously believe," said they, "that a doctrine so important, so closely connected with many points of which the apostles have treated, would not once have been directly taught in their writings?" If he attempted to prove from the Scriptures, confession, the mass, and the worship of saints, he was met by the same kind of observations. "He could not seriously think," they said to him, "that points become so important, would have been scarcely mentioned in the course of so many pages addressed to so many churches?"

There was, however, one point on which he found them more docile.

The worship of the Virgin Mary has always been one of the priest's surest instruments of persuasion and influence. Hence the immense importance which has been given to this worship; hence its very existence, for there is no article of faith upon which an enlightened Romanist, provided he trace it to its origin, is so soon obliged to pass condemnation.

But, on the other hand, it is also one of those upon which the most enlightened do not allow themselves to reason. "What harm does this worship do us, then?" they seem to say to those who oppose it. "It combines everything so admirably, faith, charity, and religious as well as poetical emotions. We have not much to do with it ourselves; but it is

the religion of our wives and daughters. Why should we deprive them of it?"

It is, indeed, especially the religion of women. Why so? Christianity offers them all the emotions which their nature peculiarly needs, and certainly no woman ever sought them from this source in vain; but the Church of Rome prefers offering them herself, according to her own ideas, and in a worship exclusively hers, the influence of which must necessarily turn to her advantage.

There was nothing, however, a hundred years ago, at all approaching to what has been said and done on this subject in our day. The prevailing infidelity had rendered a great service to Romanism; it obliged it to be, at least outwardly, as rational as the system will admit of. Books such as those with which we are now inundated, would then have roused the indignation of the faithful almost as much as of the infidel party. The Virgin Mary, though honoured officially, remained, amongst well-informed persons, quite in the background. She performed no miracles; appeared to no one; she was satisfied with being, in virtue of Louis XIII.'s vow, the patroness of France, without exacting from the French people as much honour as she received in Italy or in Spain. No one would have ventured to say, like M. de Bonald in 1844, that the religion of Christ, and devotion to the Virgin, were "*two sisters;*" no one would have dared to affirm, like him, that "these two sisters had come down *together* from the holy mountain, to go forth *together* to the conquest of souls," nor, still less, that "*wherever* the standard of salvation is raised, the colours of Mary are seen unfurled." The Protestants would not have been alone to utter the cry of "falsehood," and the learned Jansenists would have asked the clergy whether they intended to furnish fresh weapons to heretics, and new subjects for ridicule to infidels.

Father Bourges, too, had very cleverly withdrawn this question from Scriptural ground, on which he knew well that the young girls would defeat him; it was even by giving way on this point that he had begun to insinuate the thing to them. "The worship of the Virgin was not commanded in Scripture; but had Scripture intended to fix, upon all points, the precise limits of what would be agreeable to God? Could the Protestants themselves strictly justify by it all that they did in their churches, persuaded they were doing right? To please God, to save our souls—that is the point. Where is it said, that if we see a way of doing this opened out which is suited to us, we are to shun it, merely because God has not formally pointed it out? To please God—what! how can we please Him better than by honouring her whom an angel sent from Him called *blessed amongst women?* To save our souls—but salvation is promised to piety, and to love. Why then, why reject what may increase our piety, cherish our love; in a word, fill our hearts with holy emotions, of which God is still the source and object?"

It was thus that the old Dominican expressed himself, and by continually renewing the subject, he had almost succeeded. The young girls began to ask themselves whether it might not be possible to avoid all exaggeration, and yet honour the Virgin a little more than their parents did. The latter spoke of her indeed, as Scripture does, with great respect; but without ardour, without love. Was it not very cold, very lifeless? Why not love Jesus Christ a little in His mother, just as we love God in Christ?

This question absorbed them more and more. The priest observed that they did not open their minds upon it to their parents. They had then come so far as to fear being undeceived! He grew bolder. He proceeded at last to speak to them of all that he taught his female devotees on this subject,

but gradually, and as if yielding to the desires of their own heart and imagination. Meanwhile, he let all other matters slumber; he knew well enough that once this altar was raised up in their minds, the mass, and all that follows in its train, would in the end be enthroned there likewise.

The very skill he had used was designed to defeat his plans.

"Well," said Calas one day to his daughters, "you never speak of Father Bourges now. He has not certainly been all this time without visiting you."

"We have seen very little of him," said they.

"You have, however, seen him. What has he spoken of to you, that you have told me nothing about it?"

"He has set aside all that could be painful to us."

"Very good; but what more?"

"We have only spoken of—of piety."

"Indeed? He has till now appeared to me to know very little about it. His piety seemed to us still further removed from ours, than his belief from our belief. Forms, repetitions, penances,—and the saints,—and the Virgin"—

He saw that they blushed. He understood all.

He however restrained himself. The explanation, thought he, will be more useful before the converter himself.

The next day, therefore, he said to Father Bourges, "Sir, I was not aware that with you there were two religions."

"Two religions?" said the Father.

"Yes, indeed. The one you preach to me and my son, is certainly not that"—

"Oh! Father!" exclaimed the young girls.

"Let me go on," resumed he. "Father Bourges will, I suppose, be so good as explain to me"—

"Strong meat for those who are of full age—milk for babes," said Father Bourges, sententiously.

"Let us at least taste the milk, that we may know if it is pure."

"Ask your daughters what they thought of it."

"Very sweet, I am convinced. There are poisons which are very sweet."

"Poison!—the worship of the Virgin!"

"Ah! so it was the worship of the Virgin?"

"Did you not know it?"

"My daughters did not tell me, sir. They have begun their new religion," added he, looking fixedly at them, "by concealment from their father and mother, for the first time"—

But he had hardly finished these words, before Rose and Anne had thrown themselves into his arms, bathed in tears. One look from their father had sufficed to overthrow the scaffolding raised by the priest.

"Sir," resumed Calas, "I am weary, quite weary of controversy. I declared to you, some days ago, already, that I would reply no longer. But you have sown error, and I must root it up. You have concealed your manœuvres; my daughters must be taught to what you would have led them."

"What manœuvres are you speaking of?" said the priest; "ask them"—

"If they perceived them? I have no difficulty in believing that they did not. It is precisely on that account that I intend to open their eyes. Can you deny, that in speaking to them of the Virgin only, you were preparing the way for the rest?"

"I have sufficiently shown from the beginning, that I wish to see you Catholics."

"Yes; but you have allowed these children to believe that you no longer thought of it, and were only leading them

where they themselves wished to go. Is it true, my daughters?"

They cast down their eyes.

"Let us set aside the question of honesty," resumed Calas. "Besides, your Church is not accustomed, we know, to stop at that consideration when the object is to win over souls. But it is not with us alone that the Virgin is your auxiliary. There are countries where you only rule by her, where the whole of Christianity consists in her worship"—

"An abuse!" interrupted the priest.

"An enormous abuse, indeed; but do you think to escape by confessing it? It must be proved that this abuse is displeasing to your Church, that she contends against and forbids it. Is it so? Who encourages and directs all the homage that we see paid to the Virgin? Where does she reign as a sovereign, as a goddess, if not in the countries where all is done by the Church and for the Church? Can you help seeing that in those countries the people only venerate her, only *adore* her—only, for I cannot suppose that you will seriously bring forward as an objection to me, your vain distinctions of words? What do you do, I repeat, to prevent these errors? Who sanctions them, if not you?"

"You may say what you please," said the priest; "you cannot prevent all this from being foreign to the question. Have you never seen abuses in what appeared to you good and true?"

"Let us distinguish, I beg, between temporary and permanent abuses. Abuse may introduce itself everywhere; but when a thing is in its own nature calculated to bring on abuse—to encourage it, to make it inevitable, this is already, whatever you may say, a serious argument against it. Now, amongst those who are sincere in their devotion to the mother of the Saviour, do you know many in whose minds it is kept

exactly in the place which your theologians assign to it? many who only pray to her, as to one who herself needs to pray to God, and who are not, in the ardour of their faith, carried away into invoking her as they would invoke God Himself, adoring her as they adore God? All my life, I have been asked charity *in the name of the Holy Virgin;* all my life, when I gave alms, the poor who did not know I was a Protestant, have said to me—*May the Holy Virgin return it to you!* Everywhere, in the language of the common people, it is she who blesses, she who protects, she who punishes, she who saves; everywhere, as soon as she becomes something in religion, she becomes more than you yourselves teach, in your books, that she ought to be. Once more, all that infallibly entails abuses, dangerous abuses, be it in itself good or bad, is an evil. One thing alone, therefore, could sanction or excuse the worship of the Virgin—its being enjoined, or at least permitted, by Scripture. Does it enjoin it? You cannot venture to affirm that it does. Does it permit it? You will say yes."

"How could we say no? 'All generations shall call me blessed,' said Mary herself."

"Do we refuse to call her blessed? But between that and worshipping her, there is a vast difference. Upon this very word *blessed*, we have a commentary in the Gospel, completely opposed to the sense that you would give it. 'Blessed,' cries out a woman, 'blessed the womb that bare thee!' 'Yea, rather blessed,' replies Christ, 'are those who hear the word of God, and do it!' Another day, when one said unto Him that His mother and His brethren desired to speak to Him: 'Who is my mother?' said He, 'and who are my brethren?' Then, pointing to His disciples—'Behold my mother and my brethren!' He adds—'For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and my

sister, and my mother.' Truly, if these words were not in the Scriptures, or if we were allowed to arrange them as we liked, I think I could not invent anything more favourable to our views. Such was Mary during the life of her Son on earth. Afterwards, she is still less conspicuous. In the book of Acts, she only appears once; in the Epistles, she is not even named. Yes, you cannot show us that name which you repeat perpetually—which you inscribe on the front of your temples—which you would teach us to invoke—written once in those long exhortations of the apostles to the believers of their times.

"And is it you, my children," pursued he, addressing his daughters, "is it you who would speak when a St. Paul has been silent? Is it you who would pretend to distribute offices in heaven? Because your feelings and your imagination require one for the Virgin, the Virgin must have one! But reflect what you are doing; the heathen divinities were created thus. Everything that man imagined he needed was invoked, and everything he invoked became a god."

"We have never prayed to her," said one of the young girls.

"Would it have been long before you did so? To call her blessed, is easy enough. As soon as the mind is not satisfied with keeping strictly to that, what is to be done next but what Rome does? No, my children, no! let there be no deception. Do not hope to be wiser and firmer than so many others. As soon as you depart from Scripture, it little matters whether it be one step or a hundred—the first is the decisive step. Once we get upon the ground of human opinions, we must slip, and roll on to the very end. Only begin by honouring the Virgin, next you will pray to her, and after that adore her."

The young girls felt their danger. As for throwing off the

impressions which had exposed them to it, it was more difficult, and their father had too much good sense to require that it should be the work of a day. But the priest felt that henceforward they were armed with what would best baffle his efforts—distrust of him and of themselves, and a firm resolution to keep to the teaching of Scripture on all points. He saw clearly there was nothing more to be attempted.

He had on that account thought of taking a coadjutor, but not the same, however, as with the minister and the three brothers. Charnay had appeared to him little calculated to gain the confidence of an affectionate and afflicted family; and chance offered him a man who seemed made for such a task. That man was Father Bridaine.

During Advent he had preached at Toulouse. His sermons, although attended with eager enthusiasm, had not been able to draw off attention from the gloomy preoccupations of the multitude. The fanaticism of Toulouse, besides, had not found what it expected in them; for, although the preacher avoided all allusions to the two great trials going on, it was easy to see that he did not espouse the blind animosity of the mob. The Calas family, in particular, interested him; he was inclined to believe them innocent, and wished with all his heart to be sure of it. He had therefore eagerly accepted the proposal to visit them. He was so much accustomed to read the human heart, that he felt sure beforehand he should soon know what to think of the case.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Our prisoners had risen from table. The gentlemen were conversing in a corner; the mother and the two daughters had gone near to the window. That last ray of sunshine, which we have seen penetrating into the chamber above them, had just left theirs.

"Already!" said one of the daughters.

"Already!" repeated the other.

"Yet no," resumed the former, "why regret it? Night is less melancholy than day here; by day, it seems to me as if the sun were in prison like myself."

"Poor child!" said the mother, "is it not rather that you think it happy to go away when it pleases?"

"Perhaps."

"And yet the sun is a captive, too."

"Oh! mother!"

"Is not its path traced out?—never, you know, has it wandered an inch from it."

"A captive, if you will; but what a prison!—space—the heavens!"

"*Its* heaven. Have we not ours also?"

"We shall have it."

"We can have it now, my child, if we please. Where God is, there is heaven."

"And God is everywhere, mother."

"Everywhere; and in the dreariest prison, if we seek Him,

He is to be found, even more easily than elsewhere. Believe me, my child, the soul that has found God is freer than the sun."

"And more glorious, is it not?"

"Yes, more glorious. More precious in the sight of God than all the marvels with which He has adorned the universe. When the light of the sun is extinguished, it will still shine."

"Because another sun, one that will never cease to shine, will enlighten it."

"The last ray is disappearing; are you still as sad, daughter?"

"I am no longer sad, mother."

"You are weeping."

"And you also."

"Hush! there is some one coming! Who can it be?"

"O God! Another priest!"

"*Another*, indeed," said Bridaine—for it was he. "Yes, young lady, another."

But he had approached nearer to her, and his open and frank expression of countenance soon effaced the painful impression produced by the sight of his costume. Lavaysse, who had heard him preach, recognised and named him. Calas immediately went up to him and said—

"Sir, you see that you are not quite a stranger here. We know that you have been the friend and comforter of many of the afflicted; will you be ours?"

He held out his hand to him. But Bridaine looked at him without moving.

"You are Jean Calas?"

"Yes."

Bridaine still looked at him.

"And is it you who speak thus?"

"Why not?"

"He is innocent!" exclaimed Bridaine, seizing his hand. "You are—yes, say so—you are innocent, you are innocent!"

"For three months past I have said so."

"And is it possible that they could not believe you?"

"Say rather that they would not."

"And could they—could they"—

"Finish the sentence. You mean, condemn me?

"Ah, sir!" cried the young girls, throwing themselves before the missionary; "you see that he is innocent;—save him! save him!"

Bridaine took both their hands.

"My poor children, do not deceive yourselves as to my power. Your father is innocent. Yes, I see it. I am certain of it. I will say it openly; but there are many others who say it, and yet are not listened to. Be resigned. Pray, and leave all in God's hands!"

In a few minutes he was quite one of the family. Seated beside the father, he inquired, with affectionate interest, what were their hopes, their fears, the habits of their life in prison. They were themselves surprised at the confidence which they were induced to show him. They had, indeed, nothing to hide from any one. They did but continue, as prisoners, the humble domestic life which they had always led. All that they wished, on the contrary, was to be seen and known. Bridaine had seen them, and he had immediately rejected every species of doubt as to their innocence.

But he was beginning, in spite of himself, to remember that to see them was not his only object in being there. The man was satisfied, but the priest was not.

And yet, when listening to the touching picture they drew of their feelings and habits, he had already secretly asked himself whether they wanted the instructions with which they were harassed, and what these new dogmas could add to their

resignation, their piety, and their faith, in the most elevated sense of the word. Would religion occupy a larger place in their lives? Would they pray with more fervour? Would they love God more? In a word, would they be more agreeable to Him who, above all, looks on the heart? To all these questions the priest tried to answer yes; the man and the Christian said, no.

But the priest is all-powerful; he is so accustomed, with those who wear the cassock, to control all the ideas, feelings, and even the very first instincts of man. Under that habit, man is no longer his own master. Intellect, heart, the whole being is at the service of a mysterious power more formidable than conscience, more imperious than God Himself. Bridaine therefore began to think how he should enter upon the second part of his mission. He had accepted the office transferred to him by Father Bourges, and did not feel himself justified in setting it aside.

"This is great piety," said he, sighing.

"Ah! sir," said Calas, "there should be no praise between Christians. God alone"—

"Alas! I did not mean to praise you. I could not."

Here was the priest appearing; *I could not.* In truth, how can those who are lost be praised? And has a priest the right to think that Protestants are not lost? Nothing has ever been declared more distinctly or more frequently by the Church.

"No," resumed he, "I cannot. The more I am touched by your piety, the more my heart aches to think that it is useless—that it is thrown away."

This distress came so late that it would have been hard to believe it.

"Lost!" said Calas. "Allow us to wait till God shall decide. Lost! it may be so. 'All those who say unto me,

Lord, Lord, shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' Christ has said so."

"You confess it?"

"It is written. But you have nowhere read that we can know, while yet in this world, who shall enter or not enter. The gate is strait, it is true"—

"You said, *the gate*."

"Well?"

"There is but one, then?"

"I understand you; and it is doubtless your Church! If you are the gate, however, you are not the strait gate; for one of the reasons that alienate us from you, is precisely because we see the way to heaven made so smooth and so broad with you. With your absolutions to all comers, your indulgences at all prices, your prayers and masses for those who wish, and even those who do not wish for them, since those who may have cared least about them in their lives may still benefit by them after their death; with all this, I say, you have brought heaven down to such a low price that we really could not, even were we to go over to you, but ask ourselves if it is indeed the same heaven of which Christ spoke."

"We are, however, more accustomed," said Bridaine, "to be accused of severity than of indulgence. Many of those who went over to you two centuries ago did not appear, you will allow, to seek a more severe religion."

"Many of those who came over to us in the first days of the Reformation were still too much of Romanists to understand the emancipation that it purposed bringing about. They knew enough of it to throw off the yoke of the priests; they had to learn from it to submit to the yoke of God. Your objection, besides, would not be an answer to mine. You are severe; but where? in details. You have added a thousand burdensome commands to the laws of God, and sanctioned them de-

signedly by the most terrible threatenings; and what, in the end, is the use of these threatenings, unless it is to oblige you to multiply, on the other hand, the means of averting their effects? It is, therefore, true, in one sense, that you do not widen the gate; you narrow it, on the contrary, unreasonably. But it is only to open beside it hundreds, thousands of passages, amongst which each individual may choose the one that best suits his tastes, or even his passions; for there is scarcely one of the latter which exclude from heaven, provided it is concealed under certain appearances, or a certain outward garb. I will not enter into details, but what have you not done, for instance, in public worship, to captivate the eyes, ears, and all the senses—to offer people the means of being pious, of serving God, and saving their souls, in short—while they are merely amusing themselves? Yet Christ has said, 'God is a Spirit, and they who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.' What have you made of that declaration?"

"We keep it," said the missionary, "for those who are able to obey it. Unfortunately, there are but few."

"Whose fault is it? Your people are such as you have made them. If they require shows, it is because they have always had them. Do we need them? I go further; do you succeed in getting more devotion, more respect for worship, in your churches, with all that never-ending pomp, than the Protestants in theirs? That pomp becomes a necessity, but a necessity the satisfying of which is not even attended with any pleasure; just as the man who is given to drinking requires more and more wine, while, after all, he drinks it with much less enjoyment than he who drinks little and seldom. At Rome, in your great ceremonies, do you know who are the most affected by them? Protestants. One of our friends told me, that at St. Peter's he shed tears; and the Italians

who observed him laughed to see him weep. All, I believe, would not have laughed; but it is certain that he alone, to judge by the general aspect of the crowd, was really and deeply impressed. Never, sir, never will you have in your cathedrals anything to compare to our assemblies in the Desert. There are striking moments in your service—the elevation of the host, for instance; even then, those simultaneous genuflexions ought not to appear so mechanical. But as for hours of silence, attention, stillness, you will scarcely meet with it even in your convents; and with us, it is in the open air, in assemblies of several thousands of persons, that we could show it to you. Speak to us of your singing, of your learned orchestras! We, too, in some countries, can borrow from music whatever it has to give that is most grand and beautiful. But we experience its truest and most sacred emotions quite as much in our humble psalms. Our people have no idea of desiring or asking for more. Even here, within these walls, when we wish to renew both the remembrances and the emotions of a worship dear to us.—Listen!"

The most fortunate chance came suddenly to the support of his words. The prisoners in the story above were, at this very moment, raising their hymn of gratitude and love. And whilst Bridaine, his eyes raised upwards, was listening in astonishment to these solemn tones, the Calases all replied, as we have already related, to their invisible companions.

They had concluded; but Bridaine was still listening.

"Well?" said Calas.

"Well?" said the missionary.

"Tears, I think."

"You confessed to me that one of your people had shed tears at Rome."

"And which will be the most precious in the sight of God?"

"I know not."

"Oh! yes, you know—those shed without so much being done to produce effect. Our friend was rather ashamed at having allowed himself to be caught by those popish futilities. Are you ashamed at having been caught by our psalm?"

He smiled, and looked down.

"The circumstances affected me perhaps more than the singing," said he. "This prison—this holy dialogue through the arched roof—this peace"—

"Do not seek for an explanation, I entreat you," said Calas. "Allow us to believe that you understood our feelings, that your heart joined ours in singing, and when you hear the coldness of our worship spoken of, answer—but it is not for me to dictate an answer to you—answer from your heart, for we leave it to your own heart—say that you came here to make Romanists of us, and that we, poor captives, have made you"—

Bridaine was about to expostulate.

"Do not be afraid," resumed Calas. "Did you think I was going to say Protestant? No; we have not made you a Protestant any more than you have made us Romanists; we have obliged you—that is all—to remain a Christian. Is that true?"

"My duty"—

"Which? that of the Christian, or that of the priest? Your duty as a priest is to preach your doctrines to us, and to declare us lost if we reject them. Your duty as a Christian is to comfort us, to pray with us, to speak to us of God; it is—but you know it far better than I. Choose between the two."

"Well, then, I have made my choice," exclaimed Bridaine. "Yes, I have made my choice; I will pray with you; I will be to you a comforter, a brother—nothing more, nothing less. Let us pray, my friends—let us pray."

He cast himself upon his knees. All followed his example.

"O God," said he, "this is one of Thy miracles. It is Thy will that those who would never have knelt together till death had broken down the barriers that separated them, should unite their hearts already here below in supplication to Thee. Am I wrong, O my God? am I unfaithful to my vows? No; I had not promised to hate them. My vows oblige me to tell them that they are mistaken, that they do not serve Thee as Thou wouldest be served. But they love Thee, my God—they love Thee, as I would desire to love Thee. If we have not the same faith, we have the same love. I shall pray for them, Lord, as they will pray for me. Support them. Confound injustice; but may neither injustice, nor death, nor anything on earth, shake their confidence in Thy Divine goodness. May they live, suffer, and die as Thy children, the redeemed of Thy dear Son. Amen."

There was a long silence. His prayer was continued in all those hearts that were astonished they could thus agree. They delighted to prolong it. Never, it seemed to them, had prayer more holy or more acceptable ascended to God.

At length Bridaine rose. He repeated to them all that he had just said to God, in language at once simple and elevated, of which few possess the secret; and when through the vaulted roof a last chant of the prisoners above them resounded, he was still telling them what happiness is to be found in loving God, what joy in bearing the cross.

The cross of our poor prisoners was, indeed, to be very heavy.

It remains for us to ascend their Calvary with them. Their blood will stain our last pages; but we shall rejoice if their spirit animates our last words.

On the 19th of February 1762, at two o'clock in the afternoon, a cart, surrounded by guards, proceeded slowly through a dense crowd towards St. Stephen's Church. In this cart,

seated beside four priests, were Rochette and the three Greniers.

The sentence, which had been pronounced the day before, had been intimated to them in the morning. They were condemned—the minister to be hanged, the others, being noble (*gentilshommes*), to be beheaded. The Parliament, going beyond all that had been prescribed in the case of ministers, since they were no longer put to death on the wheel, had decreed that Rochette, on his knees, before the porch of the cathedral, "holding in his hands a taper of yellow wax, weighing two pounds," should publicly "ask pardon, for his crimes and misdeeds, of God, of the king, and the judges." The sentence ordered, moreover, that he should be led to execution "barefooted and bareheaded, in his shirt, with a halter round his neck, having labels in front and on his back, with these words: *Minister of the pretended reformed religion.*"

Of all his sufferings, that of going to death in such an accoutrement, had appeared to him the most cruel. Let them kill him if they would; but let them, at least, when they did kill him, leave him his dignity as a man and a pastor when under the eyes of the crowd. And yet it was in his own power to escape from this disgrace, and this public humiliation, and the gallows. He had but to abjure, and it would be all over. To abjure! no; not even that. He had but to announce his intention of abjuring, to speak of it as a thing possible, and his life would have been spared.

Since sentence had been pronounced, he had been harassed more pertinaciously than ever with this offer, with which he had been persecuted for four months past. The priest whose office it was to exhort him, had repeated it to him for the last time, with tears and entreaties, as they left the prison. Rochette thanked him for the interest which he appeared to take in his fate, but implored him to cease all further persecution.

The tone of his voice, his manner, showed plainly that none would succeed, even in giving him a temptation to overcome. The jailers and guards were in tears. Perceiving one of the soldiers more affected than the rest—"You are ready to die for the king," said Rochette to him; "why do you pity me because I die for my God?" The priest was completely overcome. He had hardly got up into the cart when he fainted. Another took his place.

The latter was one of those priests of whom so many are still to be seen, who think themselves zealous because they are harsh, pious because they are devoted to their Church, holy because they have resisted, though with fearful struggles, all the passions of youth. His pale and hollow cheeks, his sunken eyes, contrasted with the calm and noble countenance of him who was about to die. Rochette, too, was pale, but it was that serene pallor which tells of resignation rather than of conflict—of the ascendency of the spirit rather than of the assaults of the flesh. He even gave a degree of dignity to the garb of infamy which the executioner had thrown over his emaciated frame. The shirt, the rope, the labels, all were forgotten in looking upon his countenance, where the glory of the martyr shone more and more brightly.

One thing only, from time to time, troubled his peace; this was the importunity of the priest. Having no more arguments to bring forward, he persisted in trying to make him kiss a crucifix. He continually put it under his eyes or to his lips; he forced him to turn away his face from it, and even to push it away with his hand.

"In God's name," cried the sufferer, "let me alone! Christ is here, in my heart; you know it—you hear me calling upon His name. What need have I of that image?"

"Kiss it," repeated the priest. "I do not tell you to adore it—kiss it!"

"But that is what those do who adore it. The crowd will believe that I am abjuring."

"Do you prefer shocking them by letting it be thought that you deny Christ?"

"It is you who force me to appear to deny Him. It is you who wish to be able to say, after my death, that I did deny Him—that the Protestants deny Him."

Then addressing the crowd, he said—"Friends, friends, you know that I do not deny Him. Deny Christ! He is my Master, my God. I have lived, and I will die for Him. It is not He—no, no, it is not He that I put from me."

The other persisted, and he had to begin again and again.

The same importunities had at first attended the three brothers; but the priests they had to do with were older and calmer men, who were besides worn out by several hours of contest. They could speak to and encourage each other; they even did their best to assist their friend. The youngest had already tried, in order to relieve Rochette, to enter into conversation with the priest beside him. What did he care whether he brought upon himself the bitter zeal of this man, provided his pastor could reach the scaffold more calm, and better able to sustain to the end the honour of their common faith? The other would not yield; but Rochette had guessed the generous intention of the young man. He had rewarded him for it by a smile and a glance heavenwards. That look seemed to say, "Patience yet; a few moments, and we shall be beyond their reach."

But these moments were to be cruel.

They arrived in front of the Cathedral. The cart stopped in an empty space, which was surrounded by a triple line of soldiers. The eye could reach far into the interior of the church, which was gloomy as the grave and solitary as a desert. The front entrance was hung with black; a few

tapers were burning in the background. A tall white cross, spotted with black, advanced slowly, increasing in size as it came forward, although the bearer of it was as yet invisible.

Rochette thought it was intended that he should go in; he declared that he would only yield to force. Then, as two soldiers were coming forward to lay hold of him, he alighted, and walked towards the gate.

"On your knees, sir," said the clerk of the court, who was in attendance.

"Be it so; but before God—not before that cross—not before that altar which is down there—not before the host upon it."

He knelt down upon the pavement.

The great white cross still came on and on, but more and more slowly. It seemed as if afraid of the light.

With it a sepulchral chant, a sort of hoarse and lengthened sob, seemed to approach. The death-knell sent its shudder through the church-tower. The oppressive silence within extended to a distance. The same terror seemed to have passed over every living thing, men and even horses; every moving thing seemed petrified.

"What do you want with me?" said the minister; for this gloomy influence began to communicate itself to him likewise, and he longed to shake it off.

"Wait," said the clerk.

The great cross had just stopped at the door of the church. The chant ceased.

"You will repeat," resumed the clerk.

"What?"

"What I am going to read."

"We shall see. Go on."

He read aloud:—

"'I, Francis Rochette, herewith ask pardon of God, of the

king and the judges, for having knowingly and seditiously violated the edicts and ordinances '—"

"Sir," interrupted the minister, "it is useless to go further. You will not make me repeat that."

"Repeat!" said the priest, harshly.

"Repeat it," said another priest, more mildly. "It is a mere form."

"I know of no mere form in what regards my conscience.'

He tried to rise; but they held him down on his knees. It was something fearful to see this man obliged to dispute possession of his soul with those who were already masters of his body.

The clerk did not know what to do.

"Come, I begin again," said he. "'I'—'

"It is useless."

"Repeat it!" cried the priest.

He clasped his hands and bowed his head. They thought he was going to obey.

But immediately, with a clear and firm voice, which was heard twenty paces off, he said—

"I ask forgiveness of God for my sins. I have no forgiveness to ask of the king. I have always honoured him as God's anointed. I have preached submission and patience. I have said with the apostle: 'Fear God and honour the king.' If I have disobeyed him in what related to my ministry, it was because God himself and my conscience commanded me to disobey. I have committed no offence against the laws. I forgive my judges. May God forgive them likewise!"

"He has well said," cried the three brothers; "we say the same thing."

They had allowed him to conclude; they allowed him to rise.

"Stop him!" said the clerk.

But he had already got up into the cart, and leaping at once over the front seat where he had had to endure the persecutions of the priest, he seated himself with his friends. The astonished priests made room for him. His tormentor wished that he should be forced to come back; but the captain of the escort, who was disgusted at these disputes, put a stop to them by giving the order to move on. The cart was set in motion. The church door closed. The condemned now belonged to the executioner.

The Parliament had thought proper to make a great show of precautions, under pretence of believing in designs of rescue. This had, doubtless, been considered a means of giving some probability to the pretended crime of the three brothers, who, we may remember, were condemned as having intended to save their friend by forcibly withdrawing him from the hands of justice.

Instead, therefore, of the Place St. George, where executions usually took place, that of the Petit-Salin had been chosen, which was less spacious, less accessible, and could be filled with soldiers. A whole regiment had been stationed there from before twelve o'clock. The City-guard and Horse patrol, posted in the adjoining streets, were to lend their assistance in case of need.

Two o'clock had just struck. The crowd was becoming more and more compact, and the agitation that prevailed, more feverish. In one of the streets, already crowded, that led to the place, a priest was trying to proceed, but with great difficulty, through the mob and the soldiers. Some refused to make way; others refused at first, then appeared to recognise him, and eagerly opened a passage.

"Father Bridaine, I believe!" said a woman. "What is he coming to do here?"

"He wants to see."

"You don't say so! a priest!"

"Why not? it is a minister who is going to be hanged."

"He looks as if he were seeking for something. He is knocking at the door of a house. Ah! at the Fortouls! Protestants! What can he be going to do there? They have opened to him."

It was he, indeed. He had received a note that very morning, in these terms:

"A friend takes the liberty of offering Father Bridaine a window for the afternoon at Fortoul House, near the Petit-Salin. Not a word of this, unless he would be an informer."

He knew that Rabaut was at Toulouse. He had recognised him in this note.

Should he go? "Yes," he said to himself. Since, as a priest, he accepted his share of responsibility in the severity of his Church, he would at least oblige himself to admire, as he was invited to do so, those whom she sent to death.

He had just entered the house, and had been taken up to the second story. There, in the partial light of a passage, he felt his hand taken hold of. A door opened, and he could see who held it. It was Rabaut.

"I was sure of it," said he.

But Rabaut, without answering, and as if without listening, led him to a window, before which a transparent curtain was drawn. The murmur from the Place reached it; but it was becoming fainter and fainter. There was not silence as yet, but the noise had ceased. The rolling of a cart was heard.

"Come," said the minister, "and see."

The cart had stopped. A priest had alighted from it. Rochette was likewise alighting.

Rabaut then knelt down. His hands, which were clasped, and leaning on the window, trembled. Tears flowed down

his cheeks. His eyes were fixed. His lips murmured unconnected words. A last farewell to the friend, a last tribute to the martyr.

Rochette, released from the importunity of the priest, had performed in peace, for his three companions, the offices of that ministry which he was about to seal with his blood. From the cathedral to the foot of the gallows, he had not ceased exhorting and comforting his friends. But for the hideous dress he wore, it might indeed have been asked whether it was he who was about to die; and even had he only been there to comfort the others, his eloquence and composure would still have been admirable.

"We are drawing near," said he. "Yet a few steps—yet a few moments—and all will be over. Your heart will not fail you, I know; but what is the source of your courage? Take care; we are not merely to die as men of honour, but as Christians." And as their procession came upon the Square—

"We are arrived," resumed he. "The crowd is immense. My friends! my friends! let there be nothing for glory—nothing for the crowd!—all for God!"

"Yes; all!" said they.

"We are stopping. No farewell—no; we shall meet again—we shall meet again."

"We shall meet again!" repeated the brothers.

"We shall meet again!" cried he, as he left the cart; and this time he was heard even in the house from whence Rabaut was about to see him die.

Then Bridaine knelt down also. His head fell upon his hands. He would no longer look; he hoped to hear no longer. But already the minister had raised his death-song—the same that had been heard on so many scaffolds, braved in the same cause.

"This day is God's: let all the land
Exalt their cheerful voice" *—

And the three brothers continued with him :—

"Lord, we beseech Thee, save us now,
And make us still rejoice."

But at the last words, there were already but three voices; Rochette was expiring.

"Dead!" said Rabaut.

"Dead!" murmured Bridaine, without raising his head. He was still kneeling.

The blow of an axe was heard. One head had fallen.

"Dead!" said Rabaut. It was the eldest.

A second blow.

"Dead!" repeated he. It was the second brother.

The third stroke was delayed. Something like a dialogue was heard between the condemned and the executioner.

"You have seen your brothers die," said the latter. "Do not do as they have done. Retract!"

"Never!"

"One word, one single word, and you may live."

"Never!"

"Retract! retract!" repeated, with tears, priests, archers, commissioners of the Parliament, officers, soldiers, all that surrounded the scaffold, all that filled the square. A feeling of deep compassion had at last exploded. All the admiration and tears that the three first deaths had merited, were concentrated upon the last of the three brothers now on the scaffold. . . . .

But he had knelt down, and waited, with his head on the block. The executioner bent down towards him for the last time.

"In God's name, retract!"

* Ps. cxviii.

"Do your duty," said his victim.

A last stroke was heard.

"Dead!" said Rabaut.

"Dead!" repeated the missionary, and turning towards the minister, he added, "Well! are you satisfied? Have I suffered enough? Have you nothing more to require of me?"

"Yes," said Rabaut; "I have one thing more to require of you."

"Name it."

"You have seen the punishments. I wish to show you the use of them."

"Show me, then."

"Where shall you be on the 20th of next month?"

"At Nîmes."

"At Nîmes; good! *We shall meet again!*"

At these words, which reminded them of Rochette, they cast one long look upon the still suspended corpse of him whose last farewell they were to his companions in martyrdom.*

* The readers of this work who may feel interested in comparing the account here given of the death of Rochette and his three companions, with the historical documents on the subject, are referred to the "Histoire des Pasteurs du Désert," by M. N. Peyrat; also in the Bulletin, for July and August 1853, de la Société du Protestantisme Français —a society already mentioned in page 376 of the first volume. Copies are given of two original documents, the one, the "Arrêt de la Cour du Parlement," and the other, "Relation du Martyre de M. François Rochette. Ministre du Saint Evangile, extraite d'une lettre, datée de Toulouse, le 26 Février 1762. Both these documents are of the highest interest.—*Trans.*

CHAPTER XIX.

But the Huguenot blood had not ceased to flow. Before that day of meeting appointed at Nîmes, Toulouse was to witness another death, upon which all the horror of posterity has been concentrated. Calas was to efface the remembrance of Rochette. "Nothing for the crowd; all for God," the latter had said to the three brothers, and their names were indeed soon only to be remembered by God. It has been pleasing to us to contribute, by this work, to raise them to life again in the remembrance of their fellow-men. We can add nothing, we know, to their eternal happiness. They did not need our tribute; it is we who need to have our eyes fixed upon those who have suffered for the cause of the Gospel. If the scaffold has been thrown down, all those who dare believe and speak openly must still expect to have to go through struggles enough of another kind.

They were dead. What would be the result, it was asked, for the Calas family? An acquittal, said some; a sentence of death, said others. The latter were right. The two trials really formed but one. In the state to which things had been brought, the acquittal of the Calas would have appeared an avowal of the iniquity of the former sentence. Those who had passed sentence of condemnation in the first instance, were themselves condemned to be unjust and cruel to the last.

Some days after, on the 7th of March, the Parliament gave

to the public, on the Place du Palais, one of those sights more ridiculous than odious, of which we have seen a specimen at Paris the year before. It was got up, to burn with great pomp Rabaut's last pamphlet. His *Calumny Confounded* had deeply wounded those whose plots it brought to light, and whose sanguinary credulity it condemned. "The title alone," said the attorney-general, "and the signature, Paul Rabaut, styling himself *minister of the Gospel*, would be sufficient to excite the severity of the laws against one who dares assume a title prohibited to ministers, even at the period when they were tolerated in France." The title in truth could not please, and we understand the indignation it produced; but what was meant by pretending that the "title alone" of the pamphlet "sufficed to excite the severity of the law"? Was it not, then, a calumny to accuse the Protestants of sanctioning murder? And was not this calumny *confounded* by all that the minister had said?* The whole indictment is drawn up in the same tone. The most trifling accusations are mixed up with the most serious; the same feeling of animosity pervades and confounds everything.

Nothing could be, however, more curious than the efforts of the attorney-general to prove that there was in all this no religious persecution, properly so called. After having described the assemblies of the Desert in his own way: "You have been witnesses and judges, gentlemen, of the spirit of excitement and rebellion encouraged there. You have just punished in a preacher, not the errors of his conscience, but

* The pastors of Geneva had interfered likewise on this occasion. They considered it their duty to attest by a declaration, dated January 30, and countersigned by the Baron de Montpeyroux, resident Chargé d'Affaires of France, that no assembly nor synod had ever permitted the Protestants to put their children to death. What matter for reflection there is in the single fact that such an attestation could be deemed necessary! Beaumarchais was not, in truth, far wrong when he said, "that if he was to be accused of stealing the towers of Notre-Dame, he would begin by making his escape, if he could, not being sure whether his accusers might not begin by hanging him."

the temerity of his conduct. It is not for reasoning incorrectly, but for being seditious and refractory to the king's orders, that you have condemned him." The king, always the king; and who then had advised the king? Still Charnay's sophisms; still the same abominable subterfuge that Jean de Lourmade had taken up so sharply on the day of the Jesuit's death.

The last and decisive answer made to *Calumny Confounded*, was to burn it.

Suddenly there was a great stir in front of the Palais de Justice. It was Calas being brought there to undergo a last examination.

He was so changed that he could scarcely be recognised. For two months and more he had struggled energetically against the weariness of imprisonment, and the sufferings of his trial; but towards the end their influence had only been deeper and more rapid. Every week had added a year to his life. The furrows of care had become more marked; his hair had become completely white.

He was coming forward slowly towards the great entrance of the Palais, his head bent down, when, raising his eyes by chance, he stopped, turned pale, and seemed ready to fall. He was held up, but having reached the steps, he could hardly support himself, and almost required to be carried.

What had he seen? Nothing but the innocent fire on which Rabaut's pamphlet was burning. But the noise, the broad day-light, the crowd, the fire, of which he did not know the object, those flames that rose up before him; all, in short, combined to overpower him. The same executioner awaited him; the same fire was prepared for him. This horrible thought did but cross his mind; but the blow was struck, and his weakened faculties were to retain its traces.

His judges, consequently, were agreeably surprised to find no longer in him that clearness of mind, that imperturbable

composure which had hitherto disconcerted the most decided. Pressed by insidious questions, he hesitated, and, two or three times, appeared confused. Some inaccuracies escaped him, which were hastily set down as contradictions. These were pointed out to him with an eagerness which increased his agitation still more, and he was quickly sent back to prison, as if it had been feared that, recovering the thread of his ideas, he would once more clear up what so much pains had been taken to make obscure. He did not expostulate; but he felt that he had signed his own death-warrant.

The majority of the judges, notwithstanding, still hesitated to pronounce sentence of death. Of the thirteen councillors who composed the Criminal Court, there had hitherto only been four or five openly decided; but they constituted one of those obstinate minorities which always carry the day.

When they assembled, two days after, to pronounce final sentence, seven voted for death. This was numerically a majority; but eight were required to constitute a legal majority. Upon this, there ensued long debates, a fresh vote, and at last one of the opposition passed over to the side of the seven.

It was therefore according to the strict majority required by the criminal law of that day that sentence was about to be given. The person who had thrown his weight into the balance was M. de Bojal, one of those who had appeared most decided not to vote for death. M. de Bojal was an old man, the oldest of the members of council, a good but weak character. He was gained over, and—who knows?—it was perhaps his dinner hour, and the business had to be brought to an end!

Calas was meanwhile surprised at being left in ignorance of his fate. He thought that the sentence had been pronounced two days before, that is, immediately after his last examination. Suspense and anguish completely exhausted

his remaining strength. What days! What nights! To weigh again and again the same chances, to start at every sound, to wish to hasten and again to put off the moment when all uncertainty will be at an end, to feel carried on—your hands tied, by a torrent which may at a breath either swallow you up, or land you safe and sound on the shore—it is neither life nor death; it is a terrible mixture of all that is most cruel in both.

It was in this state that the unhappy old man had been wearing away for two days past. With his courage and strength, he was losing even those feelings of the husband and father, of which he had been such an admirable model. He who, till then, had only thought of his family, seemed, for these two days past, to think but of himself. He was absorbed in his apprehensions, which had changed into terrors. Before destroying the man,—the husband, the father, and almost the Christian too, had been destroyed.

Christian, husband, father, were to return. Uncertainty was destroying him; certainty was to bring him back to himself and to his family.

It was evening. He had embraced his wife and children mechanically, and scarcely observed the mournful pity which his condition excited in them. He had been taken, as usual, to the room where he was shut up for the night.

He sat down. From time to time a shudder went through his whole frame. Then he raised his head. His eyes seemed fixed on some fearful object,—the scaffold doubtless, the wheel, and all its horrible accompaniments. Then, relapsing into his stupor, he sunk back into his old arm-chair, of black wood, the gloomy witness of many similar agonies. He seemed no longer to see or hear, and to enjoy, for some moments at least, the melancholy repose of those who have ceased to feel or to think.

But beneath this apathy, terror was still awake. As the sleeper still hears the hour strike at which he must awake, he too heard, while he seemed in a dream, the slightest noise, the least footstep that sounded in the prison, or, still further off, in the street; and any one of those noises, or those footsteps, might be a messenger of death.

At length all noise ceased. He was a little calmer; he had, thought he, some hours before him. He might sleep,—perhaps for the last time, still he might sleep.

He was about to lie down on his bed. On his knees, at the foot of his pallet, he tried to pray. He did pray, if not as before these last sad days, at least rather better than the day before. He still saw the scaffold before him; but he was beginning to see something beyond it.

"My God," murmured he, "forgive me—the flesh has conquered the spirit. I have trembled—as if Thou wert no longer with me—I have trembled—I do still tremble. My God, they have worn me out with their delays!—sustain me"—

But all at once he stopped. He rose with a haggard countenance, and clasped hands. The bolts of his cell had creaked, and it was the first time that the solitude of his nights had been interrupted at this hour.

Some one came in. It was Father Bridaine.

His face was not gloomy enough to show a sentence of death written upon it, neither was it cheerful enough to allow the prisoner to suppose he came to pay an ordinary visit, still less to bring good news.

Calas had, however, strength enough to offer him a seat; but he fell back upon his own.

"My brother," said the priest, "you seem ill."

"Yes—somewhat."

"Have you seen—your children?"

"Yes."

"Are they—well?"

Calas looked fixedly at him.

"They are well," said he, after a pause, and without taking his eyes off him. Then, after another pause: "Have you nothing else to—ask me?"

He meant to *tell* me; and the word which could not be uttered, might be read in his eyes.

"To ask you, no," said Bridaine.

"To tell me, then!" cried Calas, rising.

But he was no longer the same man. He knew his fate, and he had regained, as he guessed it, courage to meet it.

"There is—a sentence," said the priest, with an effort.

"I knew it."

"A terrible—sentence."

"I knew it."

"You knew it?"

"Your agitation—your eyes fixed on the ground—those throbbings of your heart which raise your gown. I saw—I guessed—I know it."

But the mind was stronger than the body. He was obliged to sit down again.

"It will be—?" said he, with a voice scarcely audible.

"To-morrow," whispered Bridaine; but so low that the sound might have seemed to be only one of the throbs of his heart.

Calas had not moved.

"To-morrow," repeated he slowly, "to-morrow. My God! to-morrow. It was, then, for the last time that I saw them—that I"—

"No," said the priest eagerly, glad to have to break silence, "no, you will see your wife and children once more—it will be permitted."

"I will not see them again."

"Would you refuse it?"

"Yes; my resolution has been taken for three months past. I will not see them again. And wherefore should I?—to die four times over, five times—for Lavaysse is like one of my children to me. To make them all five pass through death in the terrors of mine—no, no, if I did not dread it on my own account—this interview would be egotism—I should reproach myself for it upon the"—

The horrible word *wheel* had come to his lips. He stopped as if he had called up the frightful phantom; then, shaking off, by a violent effort, that terror which was once more about to make him its prey, he resumed—

"To-morrow, then, to-morrow—and at what o'clock?"

"At noon."

"At noon; so be it. Come—go on. Speak to me—you see that I am calm."

"It will be at noon—but before"—

"Well?"

"The torture."

"The torture—to me! Is not the sentence, then, decisive?"

"It is."

"What then?"

"They desire to make you confess—your crime"—

"What need have they of that now?"

"The law—custom. Several of the judges, besides, it is said, only condemned you in the hope that you would confess."

"And as I shall not confess"—

"Unfortunate man!—are you quite sure of it?"

"Am I sure of it?—because I am condemned, do you begin to think I am guilty?"

"No, no."

"What were you saying, then?"

"The torture!—do you really know what it is? Those dreadful—excruciating pains—shall you be able to bear them?"

"And those—that follow—must I not bear *them?*"

"You must—yes; but those of the torture, you will have but a word to say to put a stop to them."

"But that word would be a lie."

All that Bridaine could say was in vain. The victim could not even conceive it possible that any degree of suffering would force from him the avowal of a crime he had not committed.

That immoral and unhallowed weapon, which the century was trying in vain to take out of the hands of justice, had forced many an avowal from others.

This was not, however, one of those modern discussions into which reason was only introduced with infidelity, civilization with license of manners, new ideas with the avowed contempt for all that was venerable. From the most remote times, the torture had had eloquent antagonists. It had been asked of what use it really was, and whether, even supposing it to be useful, the disadvantages attending it did not outweigh the advantages.

We say, "supposing it to be useful." Was it really so?

It must be acknowledged that it was oftener useful at that time than it would be in our day. It made up, in many cases, for the inefficiency of the police, and the negligence or incapacity of the magistrates.

But, at the same time, the use of the torture contributed to perpetuate that very negligence or incapacity of the judges, and that general inefficiency of the police. A means of finding out all that was required to be known, was felt to be at hand—prompt, easy, universal, not infallible, all agreed, but,

on the whole, very good. Accuracy of proceedings, deep investigation, all the pains which justice is now obliged to bestow on the trial of the lowest pickpocket, it was then relieved of by ordering the torture to be applied.

Was the information thus acquired even certain? Good sense says clearly that it was not, and experience said so quite as distinctly as good sense. Every day the innocent confessed, to retract afterwards; every day the guilty persisted in denying their crimes, and though crushed and expiring, still denied. These were not trials, but fearful duels between the judge and the accused, between suffering and conscience. "The torture," said Ulpien, the jurist, who did not however, by any means, err from excess of humanity, "the torture is a fragile and dangerous weapon. The greater part of mankind so despise suffering, that there is no means of forcing the truth from them; others, on the contrary, are so alive to it, that they will confess anything rather than endure it."

The necessity of regulating the use of it had been generally felt. In France, in the eighteenth century, the following were the rules established respecting it :—

In the first place, the application of the torture could be ordered only when the crime was one liable to be punished with death.

Secondly, it was required that the presumptions of guilt should be "considerable." The deposition of a single witness, the confession of an accomplice, the declaration of a criminal, were not sufficient.

Whatever new proof might arise, the accused could not have the torture applied twice for the same fact.*

* In Spain, this decision was admitted by the secular tribunals; but the Inquisition evaded it. When the patient had suffered all that he could suffer without expiring, the torture was declared "*suspended*," and it was "*resumed*" as often as the judges thought proper.

If the accused were ill, in a weak state of health, either too young or too old to endure the torture without danger of death, he was only to be *presented* to it. He was then supposed to have undergone it; and even if fear had not made him speak, he could not be condemned to undergo it in reality. This was what was called the *comminatory* torture. Only supreme courts of justice had the right of ordering it.*

The accused who was put to the torture before the final sentence had been pronounced, could not, in case he did not confess, be put to death. The judge was supposed to have acknowledged, by causing him to undergo it, the insufficiency of the proofs drawn from other sources. Having obtained nothing more, he could not logically pass condemnation.† This was the *preparatory* torture.

Finally, the *preliminary* torture was that which took place after the sentence, previous to the execution. In that case, the judge being supposed to have, on the contrary, sufficient reasons for condemning, the non-avowal of the crime could not invalidate the sentence. The accused was informed that he had no longer any interest in maintaining a falsehood; if, therefore, he persisted in acquitting those accused with him, after this last ordeal, it was a presumption in their favour.

Calas knew this, and on that account the torture appeared less fearful to him. He could not save his own life, but he might contribute to save his family.

"To-morrow, then," repeated he; "to-morrow!—yet what a thought! To-morrow—at this same hour—I shall be before God! To-morrow, I who am seated here—I who speak

* One of the reasons for which the Parliament of Toulouse had annulled the sentence of the capitouls, was, that it was there said that Calas, his wife, and his son, should be put to the torture, but that Lavaysse should only be presented to it.

† He might, however, not acquit the accused, and keep him in prison. This middle course is not allowed in the present day. All criminal trials must be decided negatively or affirmatively; and if the crime is not sufficiently proved, an acquittal is unavoidable.

—who hear—shall no longer speak, see, nor hear. To be stretched out, cold—I know not where. Where will they put me? Do you know?"

"In God's name, none of these questions!" said Bridaine. "Let the body be here or there, what matters it?"

"What matters it, indeed? Do I, then, seem so anxious about it? Come—if you know, tell me. What will they do with me?"

"Burned—and the ashes scattered to the wind!"

"O God!"

The unfortunate man had presumed too much upon his indifference to these horrible details. That fire, that complete and rapid annihilation, terrified him. He did not shrink from the idea of being a corpse; but he shuddered at that of being reduced to ashes.

"Yes," resumed he with effort, "yes, you are right. The soul—the soul, and farewell to the body! The soul! will they at least leave me master of it? will they allow me to die in peace?"

"Father Bourges has his duties to fulfil"—

"Must there absolutely be a priest?"

"Absolutely."

"Must it absolutely be he? Another"—

"Who?"

"Do you not understand me?"

"Thank you, my poor brother," said Bridaine with emotion; "but that cannot be. I have spoken to Father Bourges; he persists, he is determined. But I will say to him—yes, I will say to him—what charity and humanity will, I hope, say to him likewise. Yes, he will let you die in peace; besides, not far from you, his eyes fixed upon you, praying with you and for you, you will have—do you know who? Here, read this."

It was a letter.

"To me!" said Calas. "This handwriting! Ah, my God!"

He read—

"Calas, you know your fate. I have done all that it was possible to do. My efforts were not only destined to be useless—I was condemned to contribute to your ruin. My pamphlet only irritated your judges; your examination the day before yesterday, I am told, was influenced by the agitation into which you were thrown at sight of the flames that consumed it. God has confounded my designs, as He has confounded those of wiser men. Let us bow and adore.

"Calas, I can now only offer you my prayers. They will accompany you until you no longer need them. Do you, then, pray for us, for the Church, for those whom you will leave under the sword of the wicked. To see you, to speak to you, is impossible. God is my witness, that I would not have shrunk from the attempt, had it been only perilous. But it would be madness; it would be tempting God. I owe myself to our churches; I owe myself to that son who is about to commence the warfare, and to whom you and Rochette will have shown how a Christian can die.

"Nevertheless, I could not make up my mind to be only with you in spirit. Your friend will see you, Calas, at your last moments. Quite close to the scaffold, there is a house well known to you; look towards it if you can. There, behind a curtain, he will be who would fain kneel beside you."

"Yes, I shall look," said Calas. "May Heaven bless him, and bless you likewise, who brought me this letter."

He read it once more, and pressed it to his lips.

"I shall keep it," resumed he; "it shall not leave me."

"Do not think of that. What if it were found?"

"True. What shall I do with it, then?"

"Burn it."

He read it over a second and a third time, then put it close to the lamp, then drew it back to read it once more.

"Make haste," said the priest. "Some one might come."

The paper took fire. Some ashes fell upon the table. It was over. This instantaneous destruction appeared to strike the condemned man.

"Nothing left!" said he. "Ah! it is consumed!—consumed! But an instant ago I held that letter in my hand—saw it—read it. Where is it now?"

"*There*," said Bridaine, laying his hand upon his heart.

"Yes, you are right. *There*, and it cannot be taken thence."

"Well, then, take courage! You, too, when nothing but ashes will be left of you in this world, will be in the bosom of your God; and you can never be taken thence."

The last day had arrived. Calas, at an early hour, had received official notification of the sentence.

"The Court has condemned and condemns Jean Calas, charged and convicted of the crime of homicide, by him committed upon the person of Mark Antony Calas, his eldest son, to be delivered into the hands of the public executioner, who shall place him, bareheaded and barefooted, in his shirt, in a cart appointed for that purpose, and take him before the principal entrance of the Church of St. Stephen, where, being on his knees, and holding in his hand a taper of yellow wax of two pounds' weight, he shall cause him to ask pardon publicly, for his crimes and misdeeds, of God, the king, and the judges; this done, he shall again place him in the said cart, and convey him to the Place St. George, where, upon a scaffold erected for that purpose, he shall break his arms, legs, thighs, and loins; he shall stretch him upon a wheel erected

close to the scaffold, his face turned towards heaven, there to remain so long as it shall please God to prolong his life, in pain and penance for his said crimes and misdeeds, and to serve as an example to the wicked, and make them afraid; and his dead body shall then be thrown into a burning fire, prepared to that effect upon the said Square, to be there consumed by the flames, and his ashes afterwards scattered to the winds. Prior to which, Calas shall be put to the torture, both ordinary and extraordinary, in order to draw from him the confession of his crime, with its accomplices and circumstances. He is condemned, moreover, to pay a fine of a hundred sous to the king"—probably, the hire of the wheel!

The judges had, however, added, in their clemency,—that instead of remaining on the wheel "so long as it should please God to prolong his life," the criminal should be strangled at the end of two hours!

Whilst the wheel and the stake were preparing on the Place St. George, all was ready in the chamber of torture.

There all those hideous instruments of suffering, that a century more humane than its predecessors had successively condemned to inaction, had remained spread out,—racks, pincers, pulleys; the boot, with its iron-bound planks, chafing-dishes of all sizes, chains of all weights, without reckoning that which had no name in the sanguinary jargon of the tormentors. Everywhere, on the walls and pillars, were rings and hooks. A low, arched ceiling, damp and blackened by the vapours from the chafing-dishes, increased still more the gloom of this fearful arsenal.

In the midst of it, the legs fastened down with cramps of iron to the floor, stood a strong, high arm-chair, furnished with iron rings and leathern thongs. The sufferer who was seated there had only his tongue free, that he might confess.

Two men were at this moment examining this dreadful throne. One was the executioner, the other the capitoul, David.

We have seen with what hatred the latter was animated against the Protestants, and against Calas in particular. He it was who had ordered the arrest, who had carried on the first proceedings, and who, after the sentence of the capitouls had been annulled, had left nothing undone in order to influence the Parliament. As he could not be judge, he was determined to remain executioner. Not but that he began to feel, with some alarm, what a responsibility he had taken upon himself. His hatred did not go so far as to wish to condemn an innocent person; he only desired—but that desire was ungovernable—to have to punish the guilty. What he desired, he had believed; what he had believed, he began to perceive was not a certainty to his mind. Others, as Bridaine had said, had condemned Calas in the hope that he would confess; but with the passionate capitoul it was not merely a hope;—he was *determined* that the condemned should confess; he was irritated with childish rage at the possibility that he might not.

Hence the fearful interest that he took in all the preparations for the torture. He wished to see, touch, try them. He had seated himself in the great arm-chair; he had put on the terrible implements, and by his orders the executioner had tightened them so much as to force a cry from him. This pain did him good. It promised, in energetic language, that Calas would confess.

In what did these implements consist?—in what was called *the wedges*, the only, or almost the only ones in use throughout the kingdom. Nothing could be more simple. Four planks, a rope, a dozen wedges and a hammer. Each leg was put between two planks; the whole was fastened together, and

the wedges, one by one, were driven in between the two middle planks.

The *ordinary* torture consisted of six wedges, the *extraordinary* of twelve. On the first being driven in, the pain was tolerable, at the second it began to be horrible; at the twelfth, when it was carried so far, the legs were completely crushed.

"Is everything ready?" said the capitoul.

"Everything, sir," said the executioner.

"What are you doing there? I think you are greasing the wedges?"

"That they may go in better."

"Pshaw! they always go in easily enough. You have only to strike harder. Are you not greasing all?"

"Here are six; it is more than we shall want."

"Grease them all."

"It is useless; we shall not get to six."

"Do you think he will confess?"

"On the contrary"—

"Well, then?"

"The commissioners will have the torture stopped. He is sixty-three."

"Grease them, I tell you, grease them!" cried the capitoul. "Do you too, think that justice is going to stop half-way? I shall be there myself."

He had no orders to give, because the business was in the hands of the Parliament. His only right was his hatred.

The executioner set about greasing the other six wedges.

He had just finished, when footsteps were heard, at first confused, then regular, like those of a procession moving on. This procession was approaching. The steps, resounding through the empty passage, seemed slower, and more and more solemn.

At last, two soldiers appeared, who posted themselves on

each side of the door. Behind them came two criers, then two commissioners of the Parliament, in their gowns, then the prisoner between two priests, Father Bourges and Father Caldagues. A physician, a clerk, and two of the executioner's assistants, followed by four soldiers, brought up the rear.

The commissioners took their seats on a raised platform. The clerk seated himself at their feet. The executioner and his two assistants stood motionless on either side of the great arm-chair. Calas and the two priests were standing before the tribunal.

"Clerk," said the first commissioner, "read in the sentence what has reference to the present act."

The clerk rose and read aloud :—"'Prior to which the said Calas shall be put to the —'" &c.

"Calas," resumed the commissioner, "you know why you are here. It is enjoined upon us to force from you that confession which you have hitherto refused us. For the last time, do you acknowledge yourself guilty?"

"For the last time," said Calas, "I am not."

"Your accomplices?"

"There can be no accomplices where there is no crime."

"Proceed," said the judge.

The executioner approached.

"Brother," said Father Bourges, "what has just been demanded of you in the name of human justice, we now demand of you in the name of God, and for the sake of your soul's salvation. Confess."

"I should tell a lie."

"Give glory to the truth."

"I do so by denying."

"Proceed," repeated the judge.

He was led to the arm-chair; he sat down in it. A moment after, he was closely bound to it by all the parts of his body,

and the horrible implements were fastened tightly round his legs. The executioner took a wedge and drove it in, but a very little way, between the knees; then raising the hammer, he turned to the commissioners, made an obeisance, and waited. He required, according to custom, a third and last order.

The commissioner had evidently a struggle in his mind. With his eyes fixed upon Calas, his look of almost entreaty seemed to ask as a boon for that confession which he shrank at forcing from him, and which he was, besides, almost sure not to obtain by tortures. At last, to the great surprise of those accustomed to frequent that place, he came down from his seat, and approached the sufferer.

"Calas," said he, "this does not belong to my office. I ought to have given the signal. Spare me the pain of giving it. Confess."

"Sir, I thank you," said Calas. "This is compassion which I did not expect to find here. But you would be the first to feel surprised at that confession which you ask me to make."

"Surprised?"

"Yes. Your office is to believe me guilty, and to make me confess if you can. But apart from that office—and you say that you are apart from it at this moment—I see clearly that you know I am innocent."

"Proceed!" cried the judge, as he returned precipitately to his seat. And he was scarcely seated before the wedge was entirely driven in between Calas's knees.

"First of the ordinary," said the clerk.

The executioner took a second. Two blows of the hammer had been sufficient; this time four were required. Calas grew pale, his features became contracted.

"Second of the ordinary," said the clerk.

There was no room left at the upper end of the planks.

The legs were stretched out upon a sort of stool, in order to operate upon the whole length. The third wedge was introduced with six or seven blows of the hammer. The sufferer groaned; the perspiration rolled down his face.

"Third of the ordinary," said the clerk.

The executioner turned once more to the commissioners. At every third wedge, the questions were to be renewed.

"Calas," said the second commissioner, for the first seemed no longer either to see or hear, "do you confess?"

The sufferer shook his head.

"Go on," said the judge.

The fourth wedge entered without much difficulty; but it was near the ankle. Calas gave a cry.

"Fourth of the ordinary," said the clerk, still registering. Fifth, sixth wedge—eight or ten blows for each. Calas had no longer groaned nor cried. A convulsive trembling agitated his whole body.

There was a fresh pause and fresh questions. The same movement of the head, and the same silence.

"Go on," said the second commissioner.

A seventh wedge—an expression of frightful pain began to manifest itself in Calas's face.

"First of the extraordinary," said the clerk.

An eighth wedge; but as the executioner brought it near to the planks—

"Stop," said the first commissioner.

The capitoul had remained motionless, but dreadfully agitated. Scarcely did Calas move his lips, but he seemed ready to rush forward and catch the *yes* that his conscience was so eager for; and that *yes* had not been spoken—and he must give up expecting it—and they had not gone further than the eighth wedge!

"Stop!" cried he; "why?"

"Stop," repeated the commissioner.

But as the executioner was about to unfasten the cord, the capitoul pushed him back.

"That man is not in danger of death," said he. "Physician, come here."

"Physician," said the commissioner, "you are at our orders, and not at those of this gentleman." Then, addressing the executioner, he said, "Unfasten him."

It was time—Calas was fainting. The capitoul went away furious.

They transported Calas to the bed of *resurrection*. It was upon it that those who were condemned to death, whom the torture had deprived of consciousness, were raised up to life, for the scaffold.

It was long before he revived.

"O God," said he, "still alive! I had hoped—it is not over yet!"

But the head only had returned to life—the body remained benumbed; the legs were as if dead. Nothing, however, was broken. Large bruises alone testified to the fearful pressure. In some places, the blood flowed.

"My brother," said Father Bourges, "you have been very near death. God has permitted that you should return to life; it is a respite that He grants you—profit by it."

"If you would have me profit by it, in God's name, leave me!"

"Confess, confess!"

"Again!"

"Leave him, gentlemen," said the commissioner. "Clerk, read the minutes."

The clerk read:

"'——and the said Calas has persisted in denying his crimes and misdeeds; in testimony of which,'" &c. &c.

He was asked if he had any observations to make. He answered, "No."

Would he sign? "I will try," said he.

A pen was given him. His hand was already on the paper, when, suddenly shaking out the ink from it, he dipped the pen in the blood which flowed from his wounds, and wrote:

"*I am innocent.*

"CALAS."

CHAPTER XX.

Symptoms of that struggle between justice and hatred which had been going on in the mind of the capitoul David, were beginning to be perceived in that fanaticized population of which this same man had been both the leader and the instrument.

The condemnation had not been received, by any means, with the enthusiasm it would have excited in the latter days of October, in the midst of the gloomy pomps with which the clergy had fed the imagination of the multitude. The memorials of the lawyers, Rabaut's pamphlet, the constancy of the accused, the violence of their adversaries, all had contributed to create a majority in their favour in the enlightened public. This change had had time to exert its influence over the less enlightened classes. They did not absolve, but they dared not condemn. The populace alone remained hostile; but a delay of five months had blunted that hatred, and, on the whole, there was a more general disposition to forgive the judges if they did not condemn, than to rejoice if they did.

From the morning of the day, a painful degree of agitation was manifested in the town. The partisans of the condemned, who became more numerous every hour, ventured to speak; few of his adversaries took the part of the judges openly and warmly. The greater number would have preferred a longer delay. All awaited with impatience and agonizing anxiety the result of the torture.

The emotion was therefore great with which the news was received, shortly before the hour of execution, that Calas had resisted the torture, and that his first and last word had been to declare himself innocent. Thousands of persons had, like the capitoul, longed for the day when they should be relieved from that responsibility which tormented them, and, on the contrary, they felt it becoming heavier and more fearful than ever.

It was not therefore, as is usually the case, curiosity alone, nor horror, that impelled the crowd towards the place of execution. Calas, in his dying moments, was about to be the judge of his judges—and not only of his judges, but of all those who had contributed, directly or indirectly, to his condemnation. If he confessed, his condemnation became a great act of popular justice; if he died still denying the crime, that very sentence would be for ever the condemnation of those who had themselves pronounced it, or caused it to be pronounced. "Let his blood be upon us!" they had said in their first excitement; and now that his blood was about to flow, they trembled lest they should see it fall in curses on their own heads.

Nor did his demeanour or his words leave them any hope. At twelve o'clock at noon, he had ascended the fatal cart, and bowed and waved his hand to the crowd that pressed round the entrance of the prison. Two or three cries of death, uttered at some distance, met with no response. The prisoner had only had to make his appearance, in order to change into pity and respect all the hatred left in some few hearts. When the procession moved off, he cast a last look upon that ill-omened house where he left behind all he had loved on earth. That look completely won over the crowd.

"Take courage!" cried out a voice. "They will be spared."

"God grant it!" said he; "but they are not more innocent than I am."

They set out. From the midst of the crowd, questions were put, now to him, now to the priests.

"Have you confessed?" they cried to him.

"No."

"Shall you confess?"

"What would you have me confess?"

Then the questioner was silent, glad or sorry, according as he had hoped or feared to believe him guilty. In other instances, it was to the priests that the same questions were put.

"Has he confessed?"

They made signs in the negative.

"Will he confess? what do you think?"

They raised their eyes to heaven. "His secret is between him and his God," they seemed to say; but their thoughts went further. They began to be convinced that they were going to witness the death of an innocent man.

They questioned him, therefore, no more. They only repeated in a low and agitated voice, the service for the dying. They recited some fragments of psalms to him, but in French. Calas listened and prayed; but while he humbled himself before God, he did not for a moment cease to maintain, before the multitude, the assurance of the righteous and the dignity of the oppressed.

When called upon to ask pardon publicly for his crime, he refused, like Rochette, to repeat what was read to him. Like Rochette, he only knelt to ask forgiveness of God, and declared that he had no forgiveness to ask of man.

They drew near the spot. From street to street the silence became deeper, and the crowd more sad and still. When the procession arrived at the Square, nothing was heard but sobs.

When Calas appeared on the scaffold, and contemplated the

crowd with a countenance even more serene than when he left the prison, then, had the multitude been called upon to decide the fate of him whose death they had come to witness, there would have been but one voice—one cry—and he would have been carried back in triumph to his liberated children!

But the executioners had already laid hold of him. He was stretched out upon the platform which was made of thick beams of wood, and tied down by the hands and feet to strong iron rings arranged in the form of a cross.

He had easily recognised the window with the white curtain, where Rabaut was to be. He saw it as he lay on his horrible bed.

The priests were kneeling down, praying, at two of the corners of the scaffold. The executioner had taken his iron bar. The crowd became agitated. Some turned away; others covered their faces. No one would look on at the first stroke. It was heard, followed by a fearful cry—then a second, then a third; but there were no more cries—the sufferer was becoming accustomed to the iron bar—the spectators to see it fall.

At the first stroke, at the first cry, the curtain had been partly opened. Calas had seen his friend, and a little behind him an open Bible. Rabaut showed him with one hand the Bible, and with the other heaven. At the last stroke, the curtain was closed.

There was still a moment more painful than that of the blows to be gone through; it was when the executioner came to remove those limbs to carry them, broken as they were, to their last bed of suffering.

But the executioner, more humane than the judges, had thought of means to render this fearful operation less painful. A sheet was passed under the body of Calas, and thus he was

carried, stretched out at full length, to the wheel. There was still an expression of dreadful pain in his face, but this mournful attention had not escaped him. He repaid it by a movement of the head; and as if he had forgotten that his limbs were broken, he seemed as though he would stretch out his hand to seize that of his executioner. One thought was still in his mind. Should he still see the window? Would it be granted him to look at it when expiring? He looked—it was on his right, and he was even nearer to it.

One o'clock had just struck. The hour fixed for his death was three.

The priests had drawn near to him: Father Bourges was in tears. Every doubt remaining on his mind had vanished before the constancy of the martyr. He contemplated him in silence. What could he say to him? What consolations or exhortations could he offer? Purely Christian consolations he would receive with joy, but to administer such only would be to confess to him that he gave up offering others, and that a dying person might, after all, do without them. Father Bourges had not sufficient elevation of mind, like Father Bridaine, to get over this inevitable conflict between the Christian and the priest. In his cruel sincerity, he was alarmed to feel himself so near believing in the salvation of an obstinate heretic; he dreaded still more, therefore, himself to confirm those hopes that it would strictly have been his duty to take from him. And yet, convinced as he was of his innocence, and witnessing his resignation, what could he do, if he spoke to him at all, but point out heaven open to receive him? He therefore said nothing more to the sufferer; he only wept.

Calas, thanks to a state of complete immobility, suffered less than at first. He could not constantly see the window, for fatigue obliged him to let his head fall, "the face towards

heaven," as the sentence required; but the expression of calm had returned to his countenance. He was praying.

Twice already Father Caldaguès had again begun to speak to him; twice had Father Bourges interfered to moderate the importunate zeal of his brother confessor. Caldaguès was one of those priests who have more faith in the Church than in God—in the pardons of the Church than in God's forgiveness. He required of Calas neither abjuration nor repentance: let him but confess, never mind what, and all would be right. But Calas did not answer; Calas continued to pray. He confessed to Him who is great enough to know all, and powerful enough to forgive all.

But from time to time, his prayers were interrupted by agonizing pain. His face became contracted, his eyes wandered; the body was exercising its last rights over the soul, and the soul was impatient that it could not yet escape from it.

Once, in particular, the sufferer, consumed by burning fever, his eyes scorched, and wildly disordered, cried out:—

"What o'clock is it?"

"Brother," said Father Bourges, "you have begun so well, do not end differently. Yes, it is long—horribly long—but eternity is far longer—and it is drawing near—it will soon begin for you. Will you remember, a few hours hence, whether you had a little less or a little more suffering? No; do not ask what o'clock it is—it is the hour to pray—the hour to offer up to God, if you are innocent"—

"Still *if*," said Calas, with a look of reproach.

"Well then, no more *ifs*," resumed the Father. "It is the hour to offer up to God the sacrifice of your sufferings, *since* you *are* innocent—the hour to throw yourself into His arms."

He stopped, as if afraid of what he had just said. A heretic received into the arms of God! Was not even the very thought heresy?

"Go on," said Calas, "your words do me good."

But he bent down his eyes, and remained silent. The priest had returned.

"Yes," resumed Calas, "they do me good. I asked the hour, did I not? I hardly recollect—I was suffering so much! But I was wrong—I was wrong—it was murmuring. God will forgive me. My God! did not Thine own Son pray that the bitter cup might pass from Him? But I did not pray—I murmured. O God, Thou punishest me. I asked the hour—there it is."

Two o'clock did indeed strike at a neighbouring church.

"There it is," pursued he. "I thought I had but a short time yet to suffer—still an hour—a whole hour. But is it then really only an hour since they put me here?"

"Scarcely," said the priest. And as he said these words, two o'clock struck at another church.

"Again!" exclaimed Calas; "again. Well, I thank Thee, O my God! There are many others in the grave, who would wish they had thus been warned, hour by hour, of the moment of their death. I thank Thee, my God! But grant that I may at least give this hour which Thou still grantest me, wholly to Thee! Suffer not that pain should absorb me, or cause me to wander; and then, this hour that man leaves to me from cruelty, I shall feel that Thou hast left it to me in love."

Thus did Calas speak and pray; and from that time, whether it was that his sufferings were really less acute, or that he had more strength given him to bear up against their intensity, his peace appeared no longer troubled. Now he was silent, his eyes turned heavenwards; then closing them, he whispered long and fervent prayers; again, turning towards the window, he united in thought and desire with him whose eyes were ever resting upon him.

"Well, brother," said the priest, at length, "is the sacrifice now complete? Is your resignation entire, absolute?"

"I hope so," said he. "I wish I were sure of it."

"You may."

"How?"

"If you were told that you should remain there two hours longer, what would you do?"

Calas thought a moment.

"I should acquiesce," said he.

"Fully?"

"Yes,—fully."

"It is well, brother, you have been brought where God would have you. Trial has borne fruit—it may now cease."

It was indeed about to cease. The fire was just lighted, and Calas felt the rope move that was about his neck.

He then turned towards the window. The curtain was moving. A hand, the fingers of which alone were visible, was prepared to put it aside.

But suddenly the ladder was heard to creak. A hurried step resounded on the scaffold. Calas turned half round. It was the capitoul again, pale, almost beside himself, frightful to look at. He rushed up to the wheel, and cried out with a voice of thunder—

"Unhappy man! the stake is ready—yet a few moments, and your body will be in ashes. Before God who will judge you, confess—confess!"

The eyes of the dying man were quickly turned from him to the spot whither his heart fled. At the same moment, the rope was drawn tightly round his neck. A few moments afterwards he was no more.

But the curtain had opened again. He had seen his pastor once more, one hand on the Bible, and the other raised to heaven.

Ten days later, the 20th of March 1762, a man was climbing, very early in the morning, the rocky path, where treachery had well-nigh caused Rabaut, some years before, to fall into the hands of the Marquis de Narniers.

That man, though still young, bore the marks upon his brow of that premature age, brought on by the passions, by sorrow, and fatigue; but an energetic spirit, and even a sort of joy shone through these furrows.

He seemed affected. He stopped, from time to time, either to take breath, or to look round him; yet he did not seem as if looking out for the road. The place was evidently familiar to him.

When he arrived near the cavern, his emotion redoubled. He could hardly support himself; he seemed even to hesitate whether he would go on. At last, as if suddenly making a great effort to master his feelings, he increased his pace, and went to throw himself on his knees at the spot where old Fabre, on the day of treachery, had sat down mourning for his son.

The traveller wept too; he seemed to ask forgiveness of God for some great sin. His forehead was bent lower and lower down to the rock, which was wet with dew. His whole body seemed bowed to the earth. His hands trembled as his lips moved. His eyes, at first raised to heaven, were now fixed on the ground. A man, whom he could not see, had just come out of the cavern. After examining him for an instant, from its entrance, he approached him, but slowly and without noise. He bent down towards him, as if to hear his prayer, after contemplating him with emotion. At last, he laid his hand upon his shoulder—

"Bruyn!" said he.

Bruyn—for he it was—rose quickly.

"Fabre!" he exclaimed.

He drew back, but Fabre held out his arms to him, and he threw himself into them, weeping.

"And you too," said he, "forgive me!—you of whom I was thinking at that very moment. You—but," resumed he, "how are you here? Are you free? Have you escaped?"

"I have been set at liberty," said Fabre.

"By whom?"

"People in very high stations have interested themselves on my behalf. They pleaded, it would seem, my"—

"Yes; your sacrifice."

"Well, I am free."

"Since when?"

"Since the 10th of this month."

"O God! the very day"—

"Yes, Calas—I know; but his blood will not have been shed in vain. He would have willingly shed it, and of his own accord, if he had known what his death was to do for us."

"So you think"—

"I hope. The indignation is universal. At Toulon, at Marseilles, in all the towns through which I passed, the outcry against the Parliament of Toulouse is universal. But that is not all. People are inquiring into the laws by which we are governed; they are astonished and indignant at finding them still in force. At Montpellier, the Prince de Beauvau desired to see me. He praised me far too much; but all his praises were promises of toleration and peace. Everywhere I was told that we have reached the close of our sufferings."

"It was not the priests, my poor fellow, who told you so; and the priests are more powerful than the Prince de Beauvau."

"I only told you that I hoped, not that I was sure. We are advancing towards an era of toleration—there can be no

longer a doubt of it; but it may still be far off. The Jesuits are about to be banished, but the spirit of persecution will not be banished, for it is in reality not theirs only, but that of all the clergy.* Let us take advantage of the moments of peace that God grants us, and bless Him for them. Is it not He who holds all hearts and spirits in His own hand? The same Marquis de Narniers, who has done us so much harm, is now become one of our warmest friends."

"I know it," said Bruyn.

"But what you do not perhaps know, is that the assembly of to-day is to be held under his protection. He has taken measures accordingly, with all the commanding officers in the province. For the first time, for nearly eighty years, we are sure of not being disturbed. Is it not a blessed day for our churches, Bruyn?"

"For you too, Fabre?"

"And for you too, Bruyn. The Church resembles heaven —there is more joy in her bosom for one sinner that repents, than for—but do not let us speak of just persons—for ninety and nine of His children who have remained faithful to Him. You had not returned to this country before, Bruyn?"

"No; and I had at last taken a vow never to return to it."

"And who has made you break your vow?"

"It was *he*. I was at Paris. He wrote to me—take this and read it.

"'The 20th of March, my dear Bruyn, will be a great day for me. It is fixed for the ordination of my eldest son, the friend of your childhood. I wish it to be likewise the day of your public reconciliation to the Church, that has wept over you as one lost. I ask this as a friend; if necessary,

* We have seen elsewhere, how the clergy struggled, up to the period of the Revolution, against the tolerant views of Louis XVI.

I require it of you, in virtue of the authority you have given me over your conscience. Come—it may be that God has in reserve for you more blessings than you dare hope for.'"

"What does he mean?" said Fabre. "Is it a wish?—is it a promise?"

"I cannot tell. The only blessing that I expect is the reconciliation which he promises me. What more have I to hope for? Since the death of Madeleine"—

"Madeleine is dead!"

"Did you not know it?"

"Where did she die? At the convent?"

"At the house of an abbé, who wished to make her his mistress."

"The miscreant! and you knew of it?"

"Too late. She being dead, you understand that my hopes in this world cannot go further than my being once more received into favour by my former brethren. Be that as it may, I was determined to pass by this spot; I was determined to see these scenes once more."

"And I too," said Fabre, interrupting him, that he might not go back upon his lamentable story. "I arrived at Nîmes last night. I had only time to embrace my father."

"And how is mine, Fabre? In what state did you leave him? I know that you have been a son to him."

"My departure was very distressing to him."

"Did you know that I had asked permission to take his place?"

"Yes; and that it had been refused."

"It was but just. I did not deserve to be allowed to perform a noble action."

They were arrived at the *Temple*. This was, it will be remembered, the name of one of the spots where the large assemblies were held. It could contain ten thousand persons.

The place had been rendered celebrated in the history of the Desert, by the numerous issues it afforded, and the heights favourably situated round it, whence danger could be descried afar off.

Some members of the flock, who had arrived by different roads, were already assembled there. The pulpit was erected, and behind it, a tent for the pastors.

The arrivals succeeded each other, first at intervals, then more rapidly. Very soon, although there was still an hour to wait, every place was filled. The greater number, however, were not aware of the protection of the Marquis de Narniers. They came, as usual, ready to bear the consequences of their *crime*. They had left their homes, saying to themselves, as ever, that perhaps they might never return to them.

The death of Rochette and the three brothers, that of Calas, the details of which had only been known for two or three days past, naturally formed the subject of every conversation. They felt more than ever under the rod; and yet never had a larger or a more zealous assembly been seen at the *Temple*.

The attraction held out by the ceremony of the day was added to their usual zeal; and to this attraction was joined that of the very danger itself, and of those remembrances, marked with blood, which they delighted to revive. It seemed glorious to them to erect that pulpit which for a hundred years past kings and Parliaments had outvied each other in undermining—in the very face of the gallows of one who formerly ascended it. All, at the recital of these glorious deaths, had asked themselves if they should so die. All had felt the desire to make proof of their own courage, by braving once more the laws that Rochette had braved.

A crowd had gathered round Fabre, and even a greater

crowd round Bruyn. His friend's words were already verified; these poor people were more rejoiced and more affected at the sight of repentance than at that of spotless virtue, even when surrounded by all the brilliancy that the world could give to it.

According to old custom, seven pastors were to take part in the imposition of hands. The pastors, Vincent, Guizot, Encontre, Gibert, Bastide, and Pradel, had already arrived in succession, accompanied by the *elders* of their several churches. Our two friends, who were near the tent, had seen them enter it.

"*He* is not arrived," said Bruyn.

"You know that he is stopped at every step; so many people want to speak to him. But what is the matter with you?"

"He arrived late, too, on the day that—O my God! my God!" Bruyn hid his face. "No," resumed he, "no, it is too much for me. I feel all my torments of that day renewed. Do not try to take the feeling from me—it is useless."

"Well, here is a sight that will take it away."

Rabaut arrived at that moment, preceded by his four guides, and followed by a numerous party. His son, to whom all eyes were turned, was at his side.

When he had nearly reached the middle of the assembly, he asked if Bruyn had been seen. He was answered in the affirmative, and told that he would find him a little further on. But his question had already passed from mouth to mouth. Bruyn came forward; Fabre took him by the hand, and they both went to meet the pastor. He looked at them for a moment; then, without saying a word, motioned to them to follow him.

A platform, prepared for the six pastors who were to assist him, had been raised at the foot of the pulpit. He made the

two young men ascend it, and there, standing between them, in the midst of profound silence, he said :—

"My brethren, here is the prodigal son, and here the son who has remained pure. To-day you all represent the father. Bruyn has sinned; but Bruyn has said to himself, 'I will arise, and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned' "—

"Yes," said Bruyn, throwing himself on his knees.

"Brethren," pursued the pastor, "do you forgive him?"

"Yes," exclaimed the whole assembly.

"Do you declare him to be reinstated in all his rights as a member of the church?"

"Yes."

"Fabre, raise him up. You have acquired, in your bonds, the right of representing the oppressed church; it is the only reward she has to offer you. Come, now—come, my children."

They threw themselves into his arms; and in sight of the multitude, all deeply affected, he long continued to repeat blessings over them.

At length, as they came down from the platform with him, he said, "Do not go far from us;" and he then went to join the pastors, who, assembled before the tent, had witnessed this interesting scene. But whilst their friends came from all sides to clasp their hands once more,

"Fabre," said Bruyn, in a whisper, "did you see?"

"What?"

"Down there, behind the pastors."

"Well?"

"A man wrapped in a cloak, and another younger one beside him."

"No."

"The young man is the Marquis de Narniers."

"He has wished to see our assembly. We have often had Romanists present."

"Yes; but the other, he tried to keep out of sight, and yet—I am almost sure of it, it was—it was Father Bridaine!"

Bruyn was told that the pastors had sent for him. As he drew near to the tent, the Marquis—for it was indeed he—came out of it.

"Bruyn," said he, holding out his hand to him, "your brethren have forgiven you; will you not forgive me likewise? I have done you great wrong."

"Let us say no more about it," said the Cévenol.

"No—let us speak of it. I desire, Bruyn, to acknowledge it openly. I do it without difficulty, I can assure you."

"I believe you. But I repeat, let us say no more about it; if not on your own account, on mine. The past is too painful."

"The future will make up for it."

"Impossible."

"How do you know that?"

"What do I know of it! You look at me—with an expression—Good God! what do you mean?"

"Let us go in."

They went forward. But how shall we describe what then took place?

Upon the threshold stood Bruyn, breathless and motionless; a few steps from him, Madeleine, almost fainting.

M. de Narniers, the bishop, was dead. His nephew, who succeeded him, allowed the rumour of Madeleine's death to circulate; he then thought it prudent to get rid of a mistress, who had besides only the name of one. He therefore resigned himself to the loss of his wager. He confessed to the Colonel that Madeleine was still alive, and that he, the invincible

abbé, had found her invincible. The Colonel wrote to Rabaut on the subject, and they concerted together to restore her to him of whom she had remained worthy.

The Marquis took her by the hand, and said—

"Bruyn, she was pure when taken from you, and pure I now restore her."

And whilst the Cévenol, who had evidently waited for this assurance in order to believe his happiness real, at length clasped his betrothed in his arms:

"My poor friend," resumed he, "this is not like the winding up of a piece on the stage, where all is perfect bliss. Your father is at Toulon; your mother is at Aigues-Mortes. Madeleine's grandfather and brothers are likewise at Toulon. Will all these relations, whose presence is wanting to your happiness, be restored to you? I think that you may hope it, but I dare not promise it to you. The number of your enemies is diminishing from day to day; but you have some who are irreconcilable, and they are those who rule over men's consciences. Unless they would retract their own opinions, they could not consent now to let you be free and at peace. Nevertheless, I repeat it—hope."

"Yes," said Rabaut, "in spite of persecutors, God and time will accomplish their own work. Children," said he, "while you await a still more solemn blessing, let me give you mine. Misfortune had estranged you from God; misfortune has brought you back to Him. May you be wholly His, now and for ever! May you belong more entirely to Him than to each other!"

"Amen!" murmured a voice that made the Cévenol start. He turned round. It was Bridaine.

The hour drew near. A deep silence had succeeded to the hum of the crowd. The reader was in the pulpit. The precious verses, solemn and distinct, reached the remotest corners

of the *Temple;* and ten thousand hearts received with gratitude and joy this ancient manna of their Desert.

Suddenly, the same triumphal hymn that had sounded three months before, from lips now closed for ever, burst forth from ten thousand voices.

The procession had just left the tent. It was indeed as humble a procession as could be seen; but what recollections, what prayers accompanied it, as it passed through the people! First came some of the elders, then Rabaut, then his son, between two pastors, then the four others—all in their gowns. Some elders followed them, and that was all. Protestantism was there in all its pomp: such as Bridaine saw it under the vault of heaven, such he would have seen it under the vaulted roof of the cathedral of Geneva.

He had remained in the tent. He could see all without being seen. He had before him the pulpit and the first rows of the hearers.

At the foot of the pulpit, on the platform, were seated the pastors; before them the candidate for orders. Finally, Rabaut occupied the pulpit.

Then—

But wherefore try to follow, step by step, a ceremony of which we could give but a faint and insignificant outline? To those who cannot themselves feel what it must have been at that spot, under that sky, ten days after the death of Calas, and barely a month after the death of Rochette,—we should not, by any description that we could give, succeed in representing it.

But in the midst of so many hearts that were deeply affected, perhaps the most affected was the one that none perceived—Bridaine.

All that he had felt a month before, near Rochette's scaffold, he felt at this moment, at the sight of that young

man, upon whom his own father was conferring the right to ascend it.

A voice within him cried out, "Thou too hast shed it!" all the blood from the midst of which that pulpit seemed to rise up.

He trembled, too, at the thought of hearing that text which he had himself involuntarily given to Rabaut, nearly two years before; he hoped that Rabaut would have forgotten it. But no. "I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves," said he; and the agitation of the assembly, the sobs that burst forth, and the emotion of the preacher himself, soon made the text alone the most eloquent of sermons.

. . . . . .

An hour afterwards, they returned to the tent, and the newly-ordained minister threw himself, in tears, into the arms of the preacher.

The preacher, exhausted in body and mind, could only murmur, "My son—my son—may God be with thee!"

And another voice repeated, "Amen! amen!"

This time it was his farewell. Bridaine had exhausted all his courage and power of emotion. He mingled with the crowd, and retired: the Christian had suffered too much; the priest would have struggled against it, but he could not.

THE END.

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